

過電 竜丸殺しの 日暮

Ryugoroshi no
Sugosuhibi

Tona Akayuki
赤雪 トナ
illustration 碧 風羽

2



Ryuugoroshi no Sugosuhibi

by Akayuki Tona

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Illustrations



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龍殺しの過ごす日々
2

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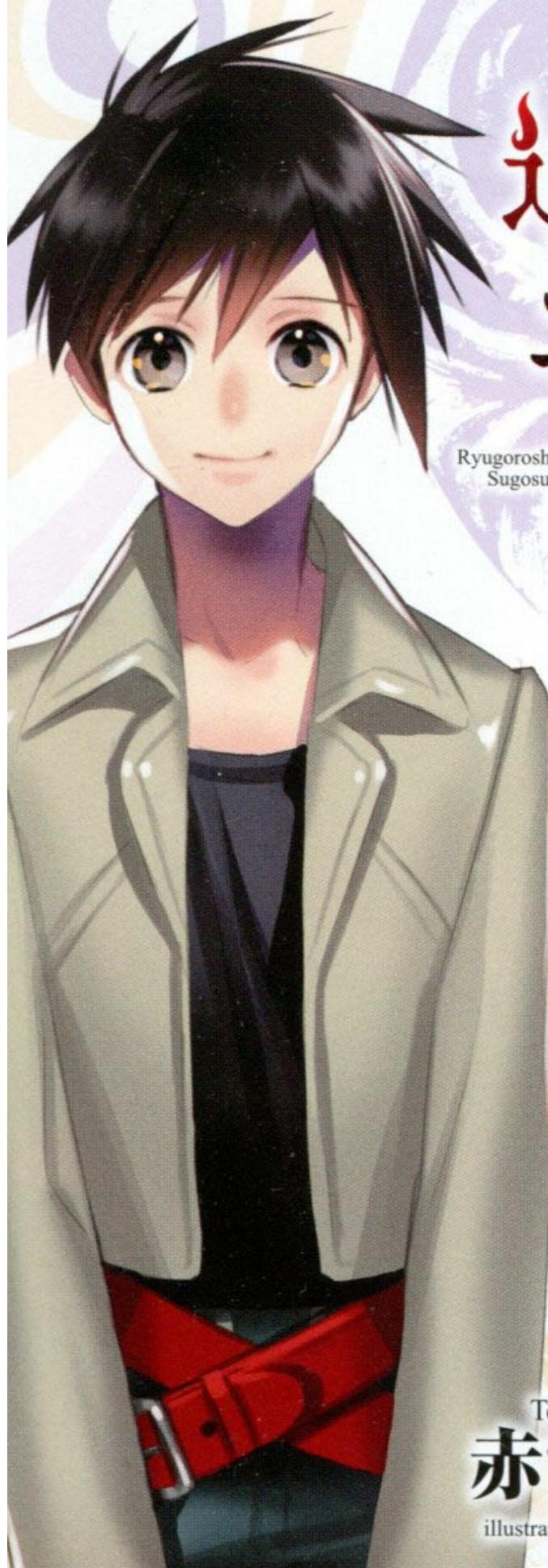


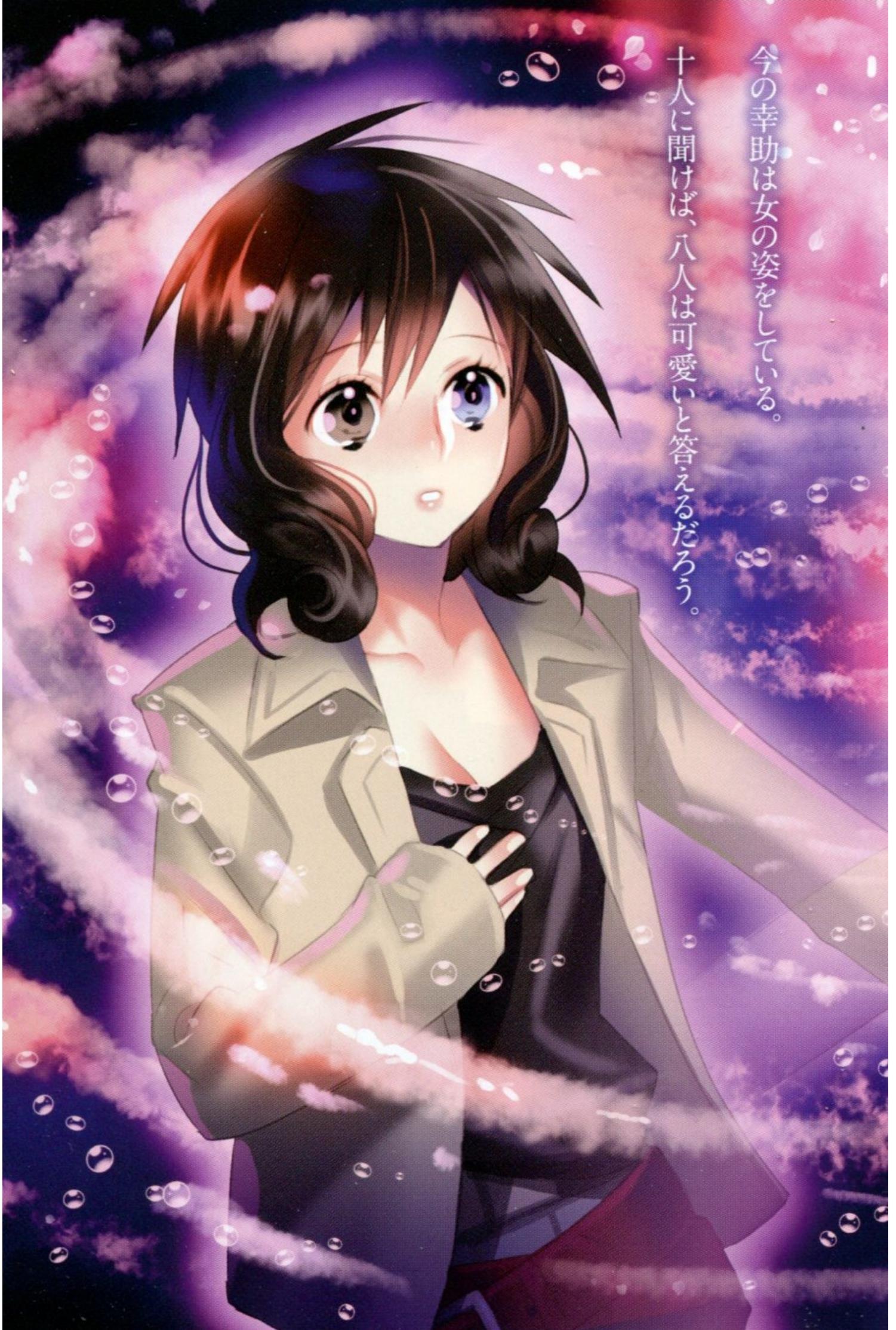
異世界に突然落ち、その際に竜を倒したことからパワーが増強し、「竜殺し」と畏怖される存在となった幸助。ベラッセンでの暮らしかを終えた幸助を待っていたのは、メイドへの変装だった。それは、お見合い真っ最中の貴族の子女ホルンを守るため、メイドとして働くことになったからだ。ハブニングでお見合いが中断となるまで、メイドとして仮の姿で過ごした幸助。その後、一人再びベラッセンへと足を運んだ。そこで初めて目にした「ゆがみ」の存在。街を救い、ダンジョンにもぐるなど冒険者らしいことをしていた幸助のもとに魔女エリスがやってきた。そしてとある目的のため幸助を隣の大陸カルホードへと誘うのであった。

竜殺しの過^ハごす日々2

Ryugoroshi no
Sugosuhibi

Tona Akayuki
赤雪トナ
illustration 碧 風羽





今の幸助は女の姿をしている。

十人に聞けば、八人は可愛いと答えるだろう。

「使ったのは、幻の上位魔法じや」



「私はセレナだよ。

わからな
いこと
があつたら
何でも聞
いて





「私はメリイールよ。
よろしくね」



人の手に受け取られたことを確認して、
ユリスは転移魔法を発動した。



エリスは両手を幸助とウイスターへ差し伸べた。



illustration 碧 風羽

ピリアル 王国

～リックート地方～

枯れた遺跡

ゼルダン遺跡

西の窪地

ベラッセン
(町内部)

紫小花の台地

エリスの家

リックート
(都市内部)

町長の家

外壁

ギルド

チェイン武具店

孤児院

旅鳥の枝亭(シディの宿)



幸助の落ちた 異世界地図

ホネシング大陸

セブシック大陸

カルホード大陸

ユケ連合
神域

ピリアル王国

フィオーネ帝国

エゼンビア大陸

ペレレ諸島

冒険者ギルド

リックート領主の家
(ホルンの家)

外壁

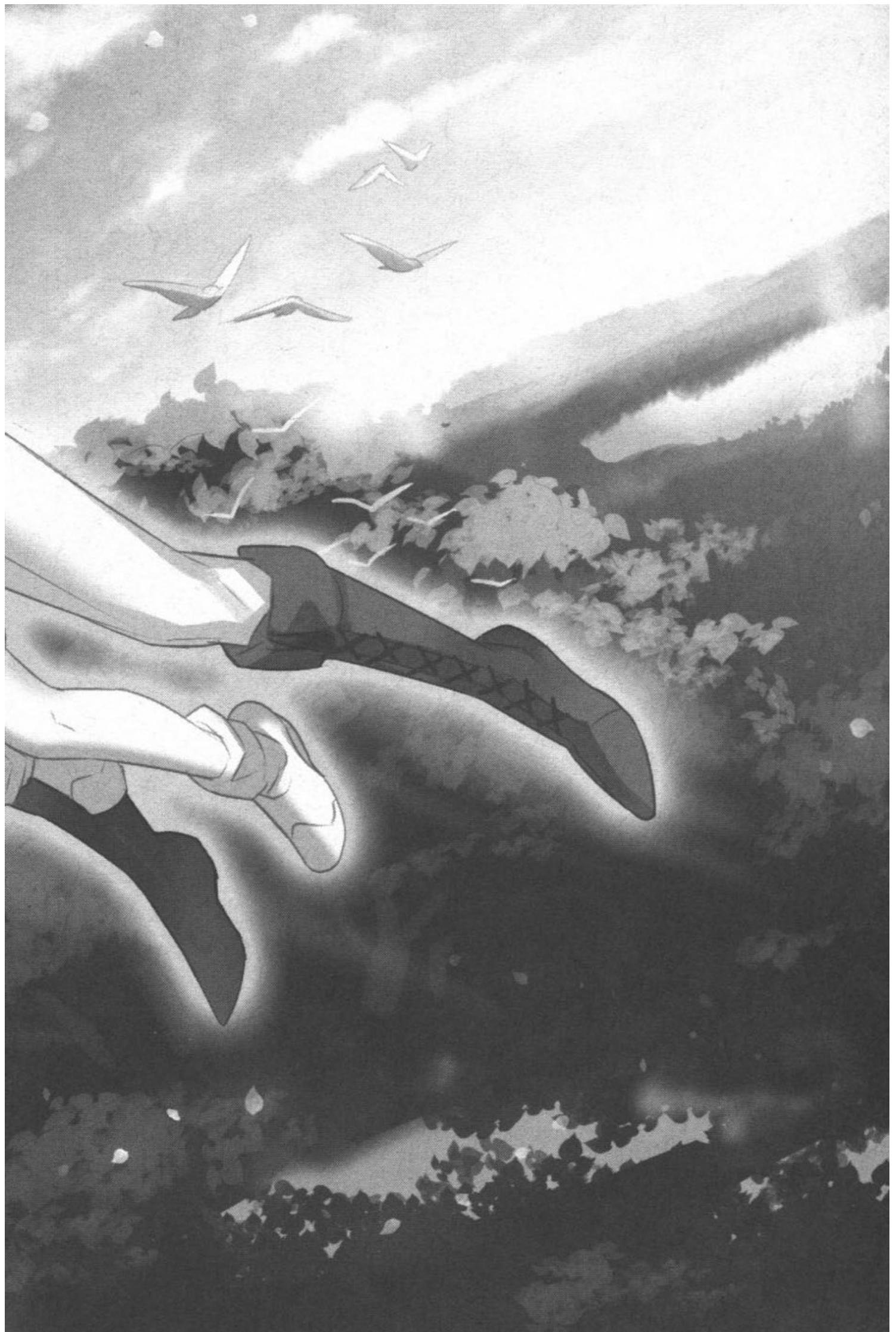
エリスの泊まる宿

スラム街

教会+







Chapter 11: I did not see the Housekeeper

Noticing Kousuke's approach, Serena stopped cleaning.

「Ah, so you finally came. Meryl-san, I'll give her the run-down so you can continue with your work」(Serena)

「Are you sure?」(Meryl)

「Of course! Just myself explaining and demonstrating will be sufficient」
(Serena)

「I see. Then I thank you」(Meryl)

「No problem! Now then, let's immediately begin with the explanation」
(Serena)

「Please provide me with guidance」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Mhmm, mhmm, it seems the day that I finally received a junior has come!」
(Serena)

Serena was nodding as her true feelings exploded out.

「My guidance will be very strict, I hope you can keep up!」(Serena)

「I was born to become a maid, nothing can stop me!」(Kousuke/Yui)

Kousuke proudly announced as he flicked his hair and stuck out his chest. Since it seemed like Serena was strutting proudly, Kousuke played along.

「Oh wow, wow! I like your attitude. I think we'll get along just fine」(Serena)

「Stop horsing around and get to work!」(Meryl)

「Ack!」(Serena)

Meryl smacks Serena's head lightly with her duster.

「I'm sorry」(Serena)

「It's fine as long as you understand. Yui-san, it's fine to cut loose around us, but please try to keep it within reasonable limits. The only person who will not reproach you for misbehaving in this household is Ojousama」(Meryl)

「Is that so?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Yes, Rafael-sama and the rest of the family expect the servants to act as servants should. It's a normal expectation the nobles have from us. If they see you causing a ruckus.. A scolding is expected but your wages may be cut too」(Meryl)

「I'll be careful then」(Kousuke/Yui)

With a serious expression Kousuke nodded. Meryl nodded back as she began to clean once more.

「Well.. I guess I went too far there. Alright then! Let's start again from the

start!」(Serena)

「Yes」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Our work.. I mean your work priorities today will be focused over here. Since you're here to assist Gretzel-san it's expected. You'll be handling her housework responsibilities except for cooking. The meals are prepared by a chef in the main building so we don't have to worry about it. We have a kitchen here as well if you're ever interested in preparing something. Gretzel-san makes us small treats sometime. On occasion, the main building will be short-staffed and will request our assistance, but that hardly happens and Meryl and I will go so you don't have to worry too much about it」(Serena)

「So you're saying I won't have to go to the main building in the future?」
(Kousuke/Yui)

Hearing Kousuke's question, Serena shakes her head.

「You'll be required to go to the main building for non-work related reasons. The servant's dining area and bath are over there. The servant's living quarter is there as well, but since you're here to assist Gretzel-san you will most likely be staying in this building with her」(Serena)

「Is that so? But I already have a room rented at an inn」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Really? Do you plan on commuting from there? Why don't you ask Gretzel-san about it then?」(Serena)

「Right, I should ask her」(Kousuke/Yui)

Being explained briefly the contents of the work, Serena also provided some behavioral guidelines in front of the nobles. Kousuke's work began afterwards. Since he had to wait for Gretzel to come back, Serena was providing him some pointers on where and how to clean.

The way she taught him clearly showed her expertise on the matter, but in Kousuke's case, his performance paled in comparison. It couldn't be helped since he's never done this before. Back on Earth, he's done some simple cleaning before, but here he was surrounded by expensive looking objects and couldn't help but feel nervous. Seeing how overly timid Kousuke was, Serena and Meryl guided him without rushing. They've experienced the same thing when they first started and understood exactly what he was going through. Rushing would only bring about mistakes.

Despite Kousuke's inexperience, he didn't make any mistake and the three were able to finish cleaning faster than usual.

「With this, the interior cleaning is complete. We'll take a short break before we sweep the leaves outside. After that is lunch and laundry!」(Serena)

「Roger that!」(Kousuke/Yui)

They stored away the cleaning tools and headed to the break room where they began to idly chat. To say that they chatted, for Kousuke's case he had no idea what to say if it proceeded to "Girl-talks" since he was a man. Luckily, the conversation focused primarily on each other's hobbies and the likes, but he was nervous about their future chats.

With Kousuke being given another worry to consider, their break ended. The three grabbed a rake and broom as they headed out of the mansion.

The cleanup of the yard was relatively simple and ended quickly. It felt like there was more they could do like removing the weeds, but Meryl and Serena didn't seem to bother. Feeling curious, Kousuke inquired about it and was told by Meryl that it's the responsibility of the gardeners.

「There's only a little growing so it wouldn't take us too much time to do it ourselves right? Why make the gardeners come all the way over here just for that?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「I understand how you feel, but that's the gardener's work territory. They have their own plans on how to maintain the courtyard. There's a possibility they planned for the weeds to grow for the purpose of creating a specific scenery a few months later. If we removed the weeds now it's likely that we will

be ruining their months' worth of planning. It would be regretful if that were to happen correct? So, to prevent any mix ups, we will only do the simple clean up unless we were asked to do otherwise.] (Meryl)

「I understand now. Sorry for being presumptuous.」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Don't worry about it. I was told the same thing from a senior when I first started.」(Meryl)

Meryl answered Kousuke in a nostalgic tone.

It seemed that it was a commonly asked question, even Serena and Gretzel asked when they first began.

The three brushed off the dust and dirt on them before heading to the main building for lunch. There was an hour before lunch would be served so the two took this opportunity to give Kousuke a tour of the main building.

He was guided to where the storehouse, bathhouse, restroom and servant's living quarters were. The timing was perfect when he was shown the restroom though. He went into one of the stalls to recast the disguise magic. It was just about to expire.

Their final destination was the dining area. The three took a seat since lunch was almost ready.

He thought back and realized the specific bathhouse he was shown was women only. Kousuke started to break out in cold sweat, but steeled himself since he had to maintain appearance if he wanted to stay. The restroom is still safe since there were stalls, but the bathhouse would have too many people so in his mind it was “out”.

Seeing Kousuke’s worried expression, Serena spoke up.

「You seem to be worried over something, is everything alright?」(Serena)

「Ye..yes」(Kousuke/Yui)

『If my disguise gets seen through I'll be treated as a pervert!』Kousuke felt, but he couldn't exactly say this aloud. He shook his head, trying to convey nothing is wrong.

「Really? If you have any problems please feel free to tell us」(Serena)

「Okay」(Kousuke/Yui)

He couldn't discuss what he was fretting over right now, but in the future he decided if anything else cropped up he definitely would.

The three finished eating and went to receive the meal made for Horun. As an extra they also took some cookies for their 3 o'clock snack time. These cookies were originally for Horun, but the shapes didn't come out well so Kousuke received them. The chefs gave Kousuke the cookies as a service since it was his first day on the job.

It seemed Gretzel already returned when the three made it back to Horun's mansion. Alice wasn't around since she went out to eat.

「Gretzel-san, I have something I would like to ask you」(Serena)

「What is it?」(Gretzel)

「Where is Yui going to be staying?」(Serena)

「At the inn」(Gretzel)

She responded instantly.

Gretzel originally planned for Kousuke to stay at the servant's living quarters. But there's a good chance his identity would be revealed if he stayed there and living in Horun's mansion would require him to bathe with others so the only option left was the inn.

Alice and Gretzel knew Kousuke would worry about this so they planned ahead for his sake.

The only issue with this plan was that he wouldn't be able to protect Horun during the evening. Alice, with Rafael's permission, was allowed to cast an alarm magic on the mansion and hoped that the current guards would do their jobs well.

「I don't see any problems with her living with us though. Staying at the inn constantly will end up costing a lot right?」(Serena)

「Her employment here is temporary so it would be a bit wasteful to prepare a room for her here. The inn's rent was discounted since it's for a long-term stay and I'll be combining my wage with Yui's so there's not much burden. Her working here is to give her some good experience and manners, money is just an extra.」(Gretzel)

「I understand that Gretzel-san accepts this condition, but I feel that it's still wasteful spending」(Serena)

Serena voiced her concern feeling that Gretzel was giving an excuse to be needlessly strict.

「Let's drop this for now, there's still the laundry to do right?」(Gretzel)

「Yes」(Serena)

「I'll be taking Yui to Ojousama's room so please do the laundry with Meryl」(Gretzel)

「I understand. But why is Yui needed at Ojousama's room?」(Meryl)

Meryl questioned with a doubtful expression.

「She's going to be assisting her with medicine making. Yui knows the basics and is aspiring to be a pharmacist」(Gretzel)

Convinced with the reason, Meryl and Serena headed out to do the laundry.

Kousuke and Gretzel headed to the second floor. Kousuke brought a tray with Horun's meal on it.

「Ojousama, we've brought you your lunch.」(Gretzel)

「Thank you.」(Horun)

「I'll be downstairs if you need me. Yui, please bring the dishes back to the dining area afterwards.」(Gretzel)

「I understand.」(Kousuke/Yui)

Gretzel bows before heading out.

Horun confirmed that the door was shut before whispering over to Kousuke.



「Alice instructed me that as long as we whisper no one will be able to eavesdrop」(Horun)

「Got it」(Kousuke/Yui)

「How was the work this morning?」(Horun)

「At the moment, there aren't any problems. Rather, I'm more worried about how I'm supposed to chat with the others」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Chat?」(Horun)

「I can't keep up with women's talk」(Kousuke/Yui)

Since Meryl and Serena view Kousuke as a woman, whenever they speak to him his head would spin trying to figure out how to respond as a woman.

Apparently though, as long as he's not openly suspicious, it's fine to sound a bit tomboyish. It's "Yui's" first time meeting Meryl and Serena so as long as "she" is consistent with "her" personality and tone they will just assume that's the way "she" is.

「I see. I don't have too many friends myself so I can't give you any reasonable advice in this matter. But as long as your disguise isn't discovered I'm sure being seen as a bit unusual is fine」(Horun)

「Is that really the case? Just to be safe I'll ask Alice too when I get back to the inn」(Kousuke/Yui)

「That's a good idea」(Horun)

They stopped their conversation here so Horun could eat her meal before it gets cold.

While she was eating Kousuke was searching through the various books on the shelf. The bookshelves had various genres from medical journals to children's picture books, with the former in larger abundance.

Kousuke randomly grabbed a children's picture book and opened it. It was titled "Miku and the Distorted House". The story was as such, Miku snuck into an abandoned, dilapidated house but it became distorted and trapped Miku inside. With the help of various animals Miku is able to escape.

「What are you reading?」(Horun)

Horun, who finished eating, spoke up.

He held up the book to show Horun the title. Her expression softens seeing the title.

「How nostalgic. Elder brother gave me that book as a present」(Horun)

「It must be important to you then」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Very. That reminds me, you're able to read now?」(Horun)

「Not completely, I'm still studying」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Please do your best since it doesn't hurt to learn how to read」(Horun)

Before they continued with their conversation, Kousuke placed the book back on the bookshelf and brought the tray back to the kitchen. He passed the message to the chefs from Horun that the meal was delicious before heading back to her mansion.

Kousuke divulged Horun's curiosity of what he's done in the past month in St. Beria.

When he reached the part about rescuing the children from the orphanage a knock came from the door.

「Please enter」(Horun)

「Please excuse my intrusion」(Meryl)

Meryl bowed as she entered the room.

「Would it be possible to borrow Yui's presence for a moment?」(Meryl)

「Is there some work for Yui?」(Horun)

「I was planning to bring you some tea so I wanted to take this opportunity to teach her how to make some」(Meryl)

「Yui」(Horun)

Horun's eye told Kousuke to go. He stood up and headed out with Meryl.

In the first floor's kitchen, Meryl showed Kousuke the various tea leaves as well as their preparation methods. She also showed him Horun's favorites. She taught him more things like the proper use measuring of sugar and the way to pour fragrant liquor.

「Give it a try yourself, I'll explain again as you proceed」(Meryl)

「Okay」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Afterwards, I'll have you memorize an incantation」(Meryl)

「Incantation?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Yes, it's an incantation for the magic that confirms the tea's temperature. I'll need you to check the tea's temperature when we finish preparing it」(Meryl)

「So a magic like that exists huh」(Kousuke/Yui)

This particular magic could be used to adjust the bath's temperature too apparently

She taught him the incantation for the magic and asked him to attempt it on the boiling teapot.

「What do you see?」(Meryl)

「There's a lot of orange spheres rising out of the water's surface」
(Kousuke/Yui)

「It seems you were successful」(Meryl)

Meryl casts the same magic while explaining the details.

The color of the spheres are a rough representation of the water's temperature. There are ten colors that represent the water's condition from cold to boiling. White being the coldest and wine-red being the boiling point. To precisely interpret the temperature, the size of the spheres is also taken into account. At this point, the sphere Kousuke is staring at is the largest and there are three smaller ones.

The largest orange sphere before him is approximately 68°C.

As a forethought, this magic was designed with water temperature in mind so using it to check magma and fire's temperature won't work. To check those a

different magic was required.

「The water isn't ready for brewing yet. Let's wait a bit for now」(Meryl)

The water was ready in about two minutes and Meryl retrieves the teapot.

She briskly prepared enough tea for one person.

「This tea is ready to be served. Have a taste and memorize it」(Meryl)

Kousuke received the teacup and took a sip.

「Delicious」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Thank you. Now it's your turn to prepare one. Did you memorize the procedure?」(Meryl)

「Yes」(Kousuke/Yui)

Kousuke began to reheat the teapot and did everything as per Meryl's instruction.

「It's ready」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Let's taste it then」(Meryl)

The two split the tea for tasting.

「It tastes a little different」(Kousuke/Yui)

「It seems so. Don't feel down though, I'm impressed you made it this well on your first try. With a little adjustment the taste will be fit for Ojousama」(Meryl)

In two more attempts the tea was made perfectly. Only task left is to produce this in a large quantity.

「Let's end the training here. It would be rude to keep Ojousama waiting any longer.

It was worth teaching you this, but it seems I lost track of time because of that.」(Meryl)

Meryl quickly prepared the tea and presented a tray with the tea and some snacks to Kousuke.

The snacks were prepared for Gretzel a little while ago.

「Please bring these to Ojousama as well.」(Meryl)

「I understand.」(Kousuke/Yui)

Seeing that Kousuke was careful with the tea, Meryl escorted him out and prepared her own set of tea before heading to the break room that Gretzel and Serena were in.

「I've prepared some tea for you」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Thank you. Kousuke, would you like some as well? I have an extra cup」
(Horun)

「I already had some when I was practicing so I'll pass. Oh, would it be alright if I have some of the snacks instead?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「No need to be so reserved」(Horun)

Kousuke grabbed a small muff and plopped it into his mouth.

「Is this muffin made with your taste in mind?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Perhaps. At least I can't say it tastes bad」(Horun)

「Do the chefs all know every single one of your family member's preferences? If so, that's quite the feat」(Kousuke/Yui)

「That's true, I struggle just trying to make something for myself」(Horun)

「I'm in the same boat too」(Kousuke/Yui)

The two once again began to chat.

He began from where he left off about the rescuing the orphans and the Violent Barb incident but was interrupted by Horun's worried inquiry. Kousuke said indifferently that he didn't even receive a single scratch, to which Horun could only smile helplessly at.

His first day working at the mansion ended with the two chatting. Tomorrow he will assist her in medicine making, or so it was planned. She also wanted to teach him some medical science tomorrow as well.

「Alright, I need to head back now, see you tomorrow!」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Yes, tomorrow then」(Horun)

He left her room and headed to the first floor.

Noticing his descent, Gretzel and the other two approached him.

「Thank you for today's work Yui」(Serena)

「Yes, thank you for today as well. But it seemed today's workload was on the lighter side right?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Ohh, well said. Seems like you'll be fine from now on」(Serena)

Serena hearing Kousuke's reliable words clasped his shoulder.

「Yui, tomorrow we'll show you how to make the beds and prepare other teas」(Meryl)

「I understand」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Seeing how well you were working today and showing that you're a fast learner you'll have no problems tomorrow」(Meryl)

「I'll do my best to meet your expectations」(Kousuke/Yui)

「I'll bring this child to the front gate then」(Gretzel)

Saying his good nights to Serena and Meryl, Kousuke left the mansion with Gretzel.

「Starting tomorrow you will be able to enter and leave this place on your own.

Please come to Horun's mansion around the same time as this morning」
(Gretzel)

「I understand」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Alright, please work hard tomorrow as well」(Gretzel)

「I will」(Kousuke/Yui)

When they reached the front gate there was a different guard. Saying farewell, Kousuke left for the inn.

He had dinner with Alice and discussed with her about the day. He retired to his room soon after.

The next day and the day after no problems arose as he was able to finish his tasks one after another. He even became acquaintances with other servants.

By the tenth day he was capable enough to handle all the tasks in Horun's mansion. This allowed Meryl and Serena who had to assist the main building from time to time to not worry.

One day, on his way back after returning Horun's lunch tray someone called out to him. Turning around, he saw someone that was likely a noble guest of the house.

「Is there anything I can help you with?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Are you one the maids here as well?」(Noble)

「Yes」(Kousuke/Yui)

「I've been staying here for the past four days but I haven't seen you before」(Noble)

The nobleman quickly glanced towards Kousuke's body as he questioned him.

「I'm a personal attendant for Horun ojousama so I'm rarely at the main building. It's not unlikely that there are people who haven't seen me before」(Kousuke/Yui)

「I see, so that's the case」(Noble)

「Would that be all sir?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「No, may I take a bit of your time right now?」(Noble)

「Only for a brief moment. I still have some work left to take care of」(Kousuke/Yui)

Hearing Kousuke's response the nobleman's eye gleamed slightly with lust. Kousuke didn't notice the change in the nobleman's eye.

「It won't take long. Come with me then」(Noble)

Curious about what he wanted Kousuke followed the nobleman.

Avoiding crowded areas, the nobleman headed towards the rear of a hidden building. Having a bad premonition, Kousuke questioned him since the only two things he can think of happening here were both terrible.

「Excuse me, could you tell me where we are heading? I really need to get back to work」(Kousuke/Yui)

The nobleman ignored her and continued onward.

Reaching the secluded spot the nobleman embraced Kousuke.

「WHA—!？」(Kousuke/Yui)

「You came this far already so I'm sure you know exactly what is going to happen right?」(Noble)

Kousuke saw the face with a disgusting smile coming closer to his face.

His prediction was spot on, but he never expected it would actually occur. Panic and discomfort invaded his mind.

Being a man himself this was something he did not want to EVER happen to him.

His other prediction was that his disguise was unveiled.

「Hehehe, I like innocent ones like you. It's making me want you more. I'll discuss with Rafael later to buy you off him. Don't worry, I'll make sure you get paid more than here. If you want to take the "night-shift" I don't mind making you my concubine as well」(Noble)

「Let go... Let me go! Please!」(Kousuke/Yui)

Dropping all ideas of acting, Kousuke could only struggle while panicking.

He knows he's much stronger than the nobleman and could throw him aside if he wanted to, but...

The moment the man tried to forcibly kiss Kousuke, someone from above dropped down.

「Stop right there!」(???)

The man who appeared from above was wearing an elegant outfit as well, like a noble. He had a pleasant, flowery scent around him.

While trying to figure out who this man was, Kousuke was pulled by the man and placed behind him.

「Inhuman scoundrel that prey on innocent women! I, Vants the Third, shall use mine dark powers to punish thou! Prepare thyself!」(Vants III)

To the sudden appearance of Vants the other nobleman was stunned in shock.

Vants felt that his appearance and introduction was well done and continued to grimace towards the other nobleman. 『Everyone who see I's valiant

appearance should be in awe!』Thought Vants.

But.. to Kousuke who heard the “mine dark powers” phrase could only recall his previous “sickness” he had a few years ago and was left speechless.

『Scoundrel! Is thou a coward? COME FORWARD!』(Vants III)

『.... Who the hell are you?』(Noble)

『I announced already, did I not?』(Vants III)

『Not asking about your name. I'm asking why did you interrupt my fun!』
(Noble)

『The Justice within I is shouting to destroy evil like thyself』(Vants III)

He proudly proclaimed why pounding his chest.

『That's.. not exactly what I asked for either. Whatever, I sort of got it so change the topic.』

Could you point some things out for me instead? What part of me is evil? That girl wasn't disliking it you know?」(Noble)

「Such lies! Her cries of refusal, is that not proof enough!」(Vants III)

「She's just acting. If she really didn't want it why did she come all the way here?」(Noble)

「..... Is that the truth?」(Vants III)

Thinking a little, Vants then turned his head towards Kousuke.

Kousuke vigorously rejected by shaking his head quickly.

「It seems thou was wrong」(Vants)

「I think you just dampened the mood with the interruption though」(Noble)

「No, I truly did not enjoy this. Furthermore, I never suspected that you were viewing me with that in mind in the first place」(Kousuke/Yui)

「It sounds like you appraise yourself lowly there. You may not be dazzling like some of the noblewomen, but the appearance you have is like the wondrous flower in the wide, open field, full of inner beauty and vitality that draws the eyes of many. I'm quite certain no one would disagree with my opinion here」(Noble)

「I dislike agreeing with thou, but alas, I cannot deny this either. For this same reason I came here」(Vants III)

「I see....」(Kousuke/Yui)

Kousuke responded half-heartedly. They do not realize Kousuke's disguised with magic and is actually a man. Despite being complimented he did not feel too happy.

Moreover, their compliments toward his "inner beauty and vitality" was probably not just due to his outer appearance, but these two have only known Kousuke for about thirty minutes. He couldn't help but tilt his head in confusion at this.

Kousuke kept silent though, he didn't want to make this situation any more complicated.

「I've lost interest. I'm leaving」(Noble)

The nobleman glanced at “Yui” and confirmed that she indeed did not have any interest and left.

「Hmm. Understanding begins with conversation!」(Vants III)

Kousuke was troubled if he should just leave or give his thanks to Vants. Considering that Vants did act to save him Kousuke approached Vants who was nodding to himself in self-appreciation.

「For saving me, you have my gratitude」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Nay! No need to mention. I love order and justice, mine actions are expected」(Vants III)

「That's quite.. Amazing」(Kousuke/Yui)

Kousuke flattered him in “astonishment”.

「Anyone can do this! Listen to thy soul’s whispers, brave forward a step and all can be called “A Hero”!」(Vants III)

『Does he mean to just rely on instinct? I think his version of a hero is a bit off』 Kousuke thought.

Kousuke digested what Vants just proclaimed in his own way. Of course, he kept this to himself.

「Nevertheless, to jump down from above.. You gave me quite the scare」 (Kousuke/Yui)

「For mine grand entrance, if it is not flashy it has no meaning. Mine stealthy tracking and timely appearance! Was it not worthwhile?」(Vants III)

「.... You were following us?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Indeed. The plan was to relax in the courtyard but mine eyes caught the appearance of thou and that vile man. Mine senses tingled, a premonition, so to

speak」(Vants III)

Vants could have appeared earlier, but felt that it was too plain to appear normally. He quickly climbed onto the roof of the building and waited for the perfect timing for his “entrance”.

Seeing how much effort he put into looking good, Kousuke could only feel some twisted awe towards him.

「Any... Anyways, I thank you again. I still have some work left to do so I shall take my leave here」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Mhmm. Guard thyself well. Find I if thou experiences such thing again!」
(Vants III)

Returning to Horun's mansion, Gretzel and the rest questioned Kousuke why he was late. He responded honestly.

They cautioned him to not take provocative actions henceforth.

The mansion has a few maids who's responsible for “Warming the beds” and

told Kousuke he was probably mistaken as one. "Reject such invitation at all costs" he was heavily instructed.

Gretzel on the side was giving Kousuke an apologetic look for this situation. This was brought about by her for not teaching Kousuke thoroughly enough.

「The person who mistook you as a mistress, what was he like?」(Serena)

He disclosed to Serena about the man's appearance and clothing.

「Ah, that person. He tried to put his hands on me too. In fact, he called out to most of the female servants before」(Meryl)

Meryl nodded as she explained this. Most of the servants called out by that nobleman were already informed about this and were able to avoid this.

The nobleman's name is Sedovit. He was dragged along by his friend who's one of the marriage candidates.

Sedovit was already engaged so he will not be participating as a candidate for Horun's hand. He was planning to run a bit wild with other women since after he is officially married he will have to behave. He loves women and is aggressive, but he's never forced anyone unwilling before. He has quite the good impression with the other maids since he treats them well. Meryl wasn't against allowing "Yui" to have a light relationship with him.

Despite being told these things Kousuke had no response. Meryl and Serena, seeing that Kousuke wasn't reacting, decided to not stick their nose into this anymore and gave a comforting smile.

「The one that saved you was called Vants correct?」(Meryl)

Kousuke nods to Meryl's question.

「It seems it wasn't just a typical oddball then」(Meryl)

Meryl's countenance became serious. Calling a guest an oddball may be rude but his eccentricity is an issue to this household.

His home country is far away and he is of a different family. To top it off his speech and conducts are exaggerated. Everyone there felt that a ridiculous person has arrived.

Rafael's impression of Vants is poor due to this and had constantly delayed Vants's marriage interview.

Rafael's connections has not extended to the ancient clans and used this marriage interview as an opportunity to make some. But... the prospects that have arrived were not to his liking so far.

If Vants was a bit more proper than the marriage interview would have been conducted without a hitch.

「Vants-san is someone from one of the ancient clans?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Yes, you didn't notice from his appearance and perfumes?」(Meryl)

「I've never met anyone from an ancient clan before」(Kousuke/Yui)

His impression of ancient clans solidified from hearing this.

The only problem here was that Vants was an exception among the ancient

clans, but since he kept this to himself no one could correct Kousuke's assumption.

「Let's end the chatter here, we still have work to do」(Gretzel)

Gretzel clapped loudly and hurried the three to work.

Kousuke finished the rest of his tasks off without any incident. Sewing, baking, the amount of responsibilities he had grew day by day and he slowly became a full-fledged maid.

Kousuke, using the previous incident as a trigger, began speaking with Sedovit and Vants. As they spoke more together he came to realize they're not bad people.

Sedovit would gift him various perfumes and cosmetics saying "Hiding your beauty is a waste" and Vants would consult with Kousuke about his younger sister. The three's relationship became better over time thanks to this.

At the same time Alice is proceeding with the negotiations. Due to Rafael's stubbornness she decided to stop being nice and plans to add in some threats next time around.

Twenty days since Kousuke began working passed. Sedovit left the mansion since his friend finished with the marriage interview. On the other hand, Vants is still around.

As per usual, Vants was once again speaking with Kousuke.

「Today, I request your hand in assistance」(Vants III)

「Assistance with?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「I heard that Lady Yui is always by Lady Horun's side. This letter, will you present it to her ladyship?」(Vants III)

「Is this a love letter?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Of course it is nothing of that sort. Mine purpose here was never to marry. Lady Horun's medical skills, her skill as a doctor is what I seek」(Vants III)

「Wouldn't setting up an appointment be easier instead of this roundabout way?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「It is as thou speaks, but all inquiries besides the marriage interview are

rejected at the moment. These marriage interviews, obviously will not end soon correct? My time is limited, staying here for a prolonged time was not originally planned. I took a seat so that I may convey mine requests. Mine turn.. Alas.. Has not come around yet」(Vants III)

Kousuke was speechless seeing the oblivious Vants. He could only dryly smile towards this pitiful man.

「This is mine predicament, can thou comply?」(Vants III)

Vants, for some time, has been contemplating on giving “Yui” the letter to pass over to Horun and decided to go for it today.

「I will if what you wish for me to take will not bring any harm to Ojousama」
(Kousuke/Yui)

「I swear on mine life and to the god. We only seek Lady Horun’s assistance, nothing else. In no way shall we bring harm to her, our pride disallows it」(Vants III)

Kousuke stared into Vants's eyes to confirm his honesty. Vants stared back without turning away.

Seeing no any hesitation in his eyes, Kousuke nodded in acknowledgment and took the letter.

「Truly I am indebted. I wish to hear her response tomorrow evening here. Regardless if she rejects or accepts」(Vants III)

「I understand. Tomorrow evening here correct? Just in case, there's a possibility others will demand to know the contents of this letter. Are you fine even if that happens?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「I do not mind. As long as it arrives in Lady Horun's hands somehow」(Vants III)

「I shall take my leave then」(Kousuke/Yui)

Kousuke bowed towards Vants and heads back to Horun's mansion.

He did not go to Horun directly but to Gretzel instead. He explained the

situation to her and passed the letter over.

Gretzel scanned the letter with magic to make sure it's safe. This was just a precaution since nobles sending letters rigged with a trap or two to others was not uncommon.

「It's safe, nothing dangerous is attached」(Gretzel)

The letter was returned to Kousuke.

「Is it fine to not read the letter?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Vants-sama may be a bit eccentric, but he's not the type to threaten others. I'm quite certain the contents of the letter is medically related. There's no need to read it」(Gretzel)

「Then, shall I bring this to Ojousama?」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Yes, please」(Gretzel)

He went upstairs with the letter and knocked on Horun's room before entering. He presented Horun the letter.

「This letter, it's from a noble called Vants. He is requesting your assistance as a doctor on a particular matter」(Kousuke/Yui)

「I see, as a doctor」(Horun)

Horun opened the letter and began reading.

Some time passed in silence. When Horun lifted her head, Kousuke spoke.

「He requested to hear your response by tomorrow evening」(Kousuke/Yui)

「I see... Please give the letter to Alice and ask if she can assist as well. If she accepts then I'm willing to accept as well」(Horun)

「Got it, I'll bring it over to her later tonight」(Kousuke/Yui)

Kousuke took the letter back and pocketed it.

The two passed the time with idle chat and snack making until Kousuke's shift ended.

He left the mansion and returned to the inn. He gave Alice the letter and Horun's message. Alice thought about it for a moment and spoke.

「Tell her I'll help out」(Alice)

「Got it」(Kousuke/Yui)

It was decided that it's best to let Horun keep the letter next time he returned.

The two ate dinner then headed to bed without incident.

Unlike the peaceful setting Kousuke was in, a disturbance occurred at the mansion.

It was something that escaped Horun's detection so she did not trigger the

alarm magic. Even Alice's magic that was observing Horun's condition could not detect it.

By the next morning the disturbance was over.

The event that occurred the night before was an attempted murder on a noble. The culprit was a servant that's been working there for over ten years.

The culprit's animosity wasn't towards the noble, but towards Rafael. He was a survivor from a former noble's household that lost to Rafael during a political strife. He disguised himself and changed his identity to sneak into this mansion. His background check passed due to the assumption that the former noble's household was completely eradicated.

Kousuke heard all of this through the various gossips among the staff. Losing his family and land, rather than trying to start over he vowed to take revenge on Rafael instead.

Ten years ended up passing since Rafael always had bodyguards with him.

Understand that killing Rafael directly was impossible he changed his target to a noble that supports Rafael instead.

If a noble guest was killed or even hurt and Rafael could not find the culprit then the criticism and censures he would receive from the other nobles would have been great.

Despite being caught, since the culprit was a servant that has been overlooked for many years, the culprit's goal of ruining Rafael's reputation was still very likely.

To prevent this from leaking out Rafael launched the news that an outsider attacked the noble instead.

Vants was the one that settled the incident with the help of a maid from the main building. Vants, with his strong sense of justice and sharp deductions, cornered the culprit into confessing. The case was wrapped up by dawn.

After the culprit was interrogated he was immediately executed, thus putting a lid on this incident.

「So something like that happened I see」(Kousuke/Yui)

Curious about the details of the case, Kousuke inquired about it to Gretzel, Serena and Meryl and was told about last night's incident.

「To think that Osvaldo-san wanted to take revenge on Rafael-sama」(Meryl)

「I heard he was a dedicated worker too」(Serena)

Surprised by this event Meryl and Serena commented as such.

「The marriage interview is currently suspended I hear. The remaining guests are planning to leave by the end of today. The marriage interview resumption has not been decided yet either」(Gretzel)

「As one would expect, who can continue a marriage interview after that?」
(Kousuke/Yui)

The suspension was because Rafael had to go around to clean up the mess.

His attempt to “damage control” the situation is not going well it seemed. The victim in the incident was a foreign noble and his status made it difficult to fix things in secret. If the noble was someone close to Rafael then this would have finished faster. He is forced to thoroughly clean this up and it will most likely take over a year.

As a result, Rafael was able to maintain his reputation as a noble since he prevented the incident from getting any larger. Unfortunately, he was forced to use up much of his accumulated favors from other nobles and is currently unable to swing around his authority like he used to. His chances of gaining more power became much harder as well.

Rafael, after this incident, wanted to resume the marriage interviews as soon as possible, but Horun's refusal to cooperate with the cleanup completely stopped him.

Thanks to this incident, Alice and Gretzel no longer had to move and were soon able to accomplish their goal. For poor Kousuke's case, it seemed he'll just be working here as a maid for the entire mission.

「There's no change in your tasks for today. Please continue to work as you normally would」(Gretzel)

At Gretzel's word the three nodded and began cleaning.

Kousuke, before he began to clean, received Gretzel's permission to convey Alice's message to Horun. After passing the message he began to clean.

Kousuke was able to meet Vants before nightfall while bringing Horun's lunch from the main building. Kousuke conveyed that Horun will accept the request to Vants. He also took this opportunity to ask where he can find Vants in the

future since he will not be leaving Horun's mansion later that evening.

「She will assist us?! Oh how wondrous! Lady Yui, thou is the brightest star in mine eyes! Like an envoy of a goddess herself!」(Vants !!!)

Hearing "Yui"s response, Vants with a face full of smile tried to hug "her" but was smoothly dodged.

「That's sexual harassment you know」(Kousuke/Yui)

「Sexual harassment?」(Vants III)

「It means to touch a women inappropriately without permission, in other words to act unlike a gentleman」(Kousuke/Yui)

「It is exactly that. I apologize, I lost control there. Please give this letter to Lady Horun. It's required to enter our country」(Vants III)

「I shall receive it then」(Kousuke/Yui)

Unlike yesterday's letter this one was larger and thicker.

「With this I bid thou farewell. I look forward to our future meeting」(Vants III)

Vants gave a big smile before leaving in good humor.

Like yesterday, Kousuke gave Gretzel the letter to confirm its safety before bringing it over to Horun.

For the next five days Kousuke was worked to the bones by Meryl and Serena before he left the mansion with Gretzel.

The next day, Horun left the mansion to prepare for the journey, telling her family and maids she's going to visit Alice's place.

The latter assumed it would be a short term visit, but Horun's destination was the Hunsing continent so there was no possible way it would be short term. Alice and Vants arranged for someone to provide some teleportation service for them, but even with this it would take around one month.

Of course, they have no plans to return to Ricardo immediately. They wanted to tour around and have some fun so it was unknown how long it would be until they return.

Chapter 12: Good things come around, Cause of the Strife

Kousuke was currently alone heading towards St. Beria.

It's already been four days since the three of them left Ricardo and arrived at Alice's home.

The three of them were together until yesterday but currently Horun and Alice were headed towards the western harbors of Sebushik continent to find a ship scheduled to head to Karuhode continent.

Vants's request required them to travel from the continents Sebushik to Karuhode to Hunsing. There were ships in the northern harbors of Sebushik that can directly travel to Hunsing, but the northern counties are currently at war with each other so Alice suggested a detour to which Horun agreed.

Kousuke wasn't travelling with Alice and Horun for the following reasons.

The client from this ancient clan was extremely strict with societal protocol. If one's position is low then informality is acceptable, but as the position gets higher the importance of formality will increase. And the client this time around was among the highest positions.

Apparently, Vants is also someone of power, but when he was speaking with "Yui" he ignored the status difference since he was in a different country. Vants was dispatched because of his lenient personality.

“When in Rome, do as Romans do” he adopted this motto to use for his own country and for other countries. It was unclear whether or not they’ll allow any form of informalities in Hunsing.

So Alice gave Kousuke a suggestion. Follow them or wait for them to pick him up. If he followed them he would be stationed alone for some time in a nearby country besides the ancient clan’s country. If he wanted to be picked up, Alice will find him in Ricardo or St. Beria later.

Hearing this Kousuke chose the latter. He didn’t want to be alone in an unknown country so he chose to stay near people he knew.

Staying at Alice’s place was out of the question since she had dangerous objects in the house that she didn’t want Kousuke to touch.

So due to his choice he was heading to St. Beria alone.

Taking three days to prepare for this journey was considered too much by most people. Unlike Earth, there was no need to prepare anything specific to board a ship since as long as their luggage is ready, they’re set. They would need to explain their reason for travelling, but Horun and Alice weren’t worried about that and within a day they finished packing. The last thing they did before leaving was erect the barrier around Alice’s home. Even that required very little time.

The reason why it took them three days to prepare was because they were

giving Kousuke various information and techniques. A reward for working as a maid for a month. They were originally going to pay him for his work, but since Kousuke “infiltrated” of his own volition, they substituted the reward with various information that they believed would be useful for him.

Alice taught him three magic incantations. The first was a small barrier he can create on or near himself, the second one was a short distance teleportation and the third was a penetrating light beam. Horun taught him medical treatment techniques that involved some use of magic.

Due to the small size of《Guard》it could only protect one person at a time and its strength can easily prevent a Lutz Monkey's attack.

《Blink》can be used to travel over a decent distance instantly, roughly a three days walk worth of distance. Kousuke actually used《Blink》to travel to a spot about an hour away from St. Beria.《Blink》has three more ranks above with the highest rank allowing the caster to teleport to any point on the world. Unfortunately, no human being can cast it as they lack the required amount of mana. Even《Blink》required a magical aptitude of D+ to cast, most people can only dream of being able to cast it.

《Beam》is well.. Just a light beam. A light beam with a thickness of a finger shot forward about fifty meters. It pierced through a boulder, it seemed to be useful. It's nice to learn, but Kousuke preferred to avoid violence so he wondered if he will ever find a use for it in the future.

The walls surrounding St. Beria slowly came into his view.

He was happy to see how much his travel time shortened compared to walking.

「A place I've seen before huh. It's a useful magic but unless I've been there before I can't use it so it can be considered a somewhat limited magic」
(Kousuke)

Feeling his confidence rising too much he placated it while continuing forward.

When he reached the gates and the scene confused him.『Is it a shift change?』Thought Kousuke as he saw no guards near the gate.

He decided to wait a bit, but he started to feel uneasy after looking into the town.

Compared to a month ago he saw a lot more people moving around. He wasn't told about any big events so why?

The unusualness of the situation didn't end there. When he observed a bit more carefully there was an big peculiarity before him.

The clothing the townspeople were wearing had no sense of unity. It wasn't

aesthetically displeasing or anything, but it was obviously off season. No sleeves, short sleeves, long sleeves. There were even some that were completely topless and some that were bundled up with thick coats. Even weirder, some wore their clothes backward or had mismatched buttons.

The animals were exhibiting unusual behaviors as well. The dogs were trembling, the cats were gathered and singing in the middle of the street and the birds were lined up neatly along the entire wall while chirping loudly.

「That carpenter is making some weird things now and the food stalls are giving out burnt food... Just what in the world is going on here! And how come no one is noticing all of this!」(Kousuke)

The number one weirdest thing was definitely that no one in the town noticed any of this!

The coat wearing man complained that it's hot while the topless man agreed with him. No one is complaining about the burnt food from the stalls either.

Everything seemed calm as if this was completely normal!

Kousuke was speechless for a moment there thinking he's the only crazy one.

「... I should check out the inn」(Kousuke)

He entered the town in order to find someone normal among this insanity.
Unfortunately, everyone was not normal.

「He.. Hello」(Kousuke)

Reaching the inn, Kousuke prayed for this place to be normal.

But he ended up falling on the ground after seeing a man hysterically laughing on the floor and a woman trying to stand a couch up.

「This place too huh...」(Kousuke)

Noticing that someone entered the inn, Shidi came out to see a perplexed

Kousuke on the floor.

「Welco— It's Kousuke-san! You came back a lot earlier than I expected」
(Shidi)

「Long time, no see.. Sort of. It's only been a month so... Well, I came back due to a few reasons」(Kousuke)

「I see. Are you planning on staying here again?」(Shidi)

「I would like to, do you have a spare room?」(Kousuke)

「None are open at all! It's okay though, you can just sleep in the halls like the other guests!」(Shidi)

「No no no! That's not good at all! As a business how could you make your guests sleep in the halls!?」(Kousuke)

He rebuked Shidi and felt his wit's falling apart when he thought that she was also crazed too.

「The guests seem to be enjoying themselves though」(Shidi)

「I see, none are dissatisfied huh」(Kousuke)

「Dissatisfaction? None at all! It's our inn's motto to do our best to accommodate! There's no way anyone would be discontent!」(Shidi)

「The fact that they're not is weird you know」(Kousuke)

Still doubtful about the customers' satisfaction, Kousuke glanced at the various customers sleeping on the floor. Every single one of them had a happy expression plastered on their face.

Trying to figure out what's going on Kousuke questioned Shidi.

「Have there been any strange occurrences recently?」(Kousuke)

「Strange occurrences? The increase in customers maybe? This time of the year there aren't any festivities planned so the amount of customers we have right now is very large」(Shidi)

「I already figured that out. There were a lot of people walking around in the streets. I figured there wasn't an event happening.. so why?」(Kousuke)

「I wondered why there are so many people around too. I'm happy that there are more customers coming to our inn though. I have to work harder! I was thinking of decorating the place with more flowers to improve its atmosphere! That way the customers' mood would be better!」(Shidi)

「You should probably hold off on that thought until you get a bed for every customer first」(Kousuke)

Shidi ignored Kousuke and headed out to get the flowers.

「She left without checking me in... Forget it, there's no vacancy here anyways. I wonder if the other inns have a room」(Kousuke)

He didn't have much expectation, but thought to at least try his luck.

It was fruitless though, the three nearby inns were also full.

There were some people who had tents set up around the inns and it implicitly showed that there were no inns with vacancies in St. Beria.

「Is my only choice to sleep in the halls back at Shidi's inn....」(Kousuke)

He truly wanted to sigh.

「Hmm, I wonder if the Adventurer's Guild allows us to stay? I should check it out」(Kousuke)

He changed his destination and headed towards the Adventurer's Guild.

Entering the guild he noticed that all the adventurers were gathered in one spot. The adventurers turned their heads around to see Kousuke. Within that crowd, Borudosu called out to Kousuke.

「You came back!」(Borudosu)

「Long time n— Wait are you normal Borudosu!?」(Kousuke)

「You make it sound like I'm normally a freak」(Borudosu)

「Sorry, didn't mean it that way. I'm just a bit confused since I came back to see that everything was a bit.. Off」(Kousuke)

「I know how you feel. I'm also confused by all of this」(Borudosu)

「Borudosu, do you have any clues why this is happening?」(Kousuke)

「Yes」(Borudosu)

Kousuke asked without any hope, but hearing that unexpected answer gave him a shock.

「WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?!」(Kousuke)

「It's a distortion」(Borudosu)

Kousuke mind raced trying to understand and recalled something he was told

before.

「I heard it's something that comes about when someone uses magic」
(Kousuke)

「That's right」(Borudosu)

「Distortions only appear when mana is rampant in the area right? Aren't distortions usually restrained with the proper channeling of mana?」(Kousuke)

「When anyone uses magic there's always a little mana that leaks out. This small leak creates a very tiny distortion. If the distortion accumulates enough it brings about terrible consequences. Just like right now. Still, this is a rare thing. This normally only happens once every hundred years. Nineteen years ago it happened here so we should have had at least seventy more years before it occurred again」(Borudosu)

「Is there any way to resolve this?」(Kousuke)

「There is. Distortions usually attach themselves to something. So the fastest way to resolve this is to find the object or living being it's attached to.. And destroy them. Unfortunately, it's not so simple this time around」(Borudosu)

「Not so simple? I guess he found out what it was attached to and tried to

break it, but failed.』Kousuke thought.

『Why can't we use that method?』(Kousuke)

『It's.. Attached to a human being. If it was someone evil I wouldn't have hesitated, but it's attached to an innocent person.』(Borudosu)

The victim here didn't do anything wrong so there was no way he could kill that person.

There were some that wanted to kill the person to resolve this quickly, but it was instantly rejected.

For now, at least. The current state of the town isn't terrible yet, but if this isn't settled soon their conditions might worsen and cause the town to be flooded with numerous deaths.

『I've become unable to leave this town since ten days ago. We need to resolve this as soon as possible before it becomes worse. If nothing else can be done then we'll have to kill the person to end this.』(Borudosu)

「I see, so you're currently looking for a different method to fix this.」
(Kousuke)

Kousuke asked if Borudosu was close to a solution, clinging onto the idea of a peaceful resolution.

Borudosu's response shattered that.

「The distortion escaped. We're currently searching for it again」(Borudosu)

「Escaped?」(Kousuke)

「This is the first time we encountered a distortion you see and our carelessness caused it to notice us. We're at a loss now trying to find it, it's as if it became more cautious after our first encounter」(Borudosu)

「How did you find it the first time? Is there a specific way to track it?」
(Kousuke)

「We had someone powerful assist us. Even with that help though we couldn't find the distortion today」(Borudosu)

「Today? It's not even past noon and you stopped the search already?」

(Kousuke)

「That child doesn't have much stamina so we can't exactly drag out the search」(Borudosu)

「So that person.. is a child?」(Kousuke) 【TL: Borudosu said “Anoko” which implies a child, Kousuke is just confirming it】

「Yes. I think you've met the child before as well. It's one of the child from the orphanage」(Borudosu)

「The orphanage Viare's at?」(Kousuke)

「I figured you would know」(Borudosu)

Hearing it was a weak bodied child from an orphanage the only image that appeared in Kousuke's mind was the eye patched child from the second floor.

「I've met the child once before. But we've never spoke to each other. Never knew that child had such an ability」(Kousuke)

Kousuke nodded in admiration.

「The child has the “Demon Eye of Truth”. The child can't control the “Demon Eye” and it's constantly being used. It's the cause of the weak body」(Borudosu)

「I see, gifts drains a person's stamina. Now I understand why that child's body is weak」(Kousuke)

「The child's resting in the back room. Viare is there as well. Ah, the distortion was originally attached to Viare by the way」(Borudosu)

「... Really?」(Kousuke)

Borudosu nodded.

「Is she hurt?! Is there anything wrong with her?!」(Kousuke)

Kousuke had connections with only a few people in this world and he became flustered hearing she was in danger.

「From what I observed there's nothing wrong with her. When the distortion was attached to her.. Her personality was.. amazing」(Borudosu)

Borudosu's face was distorted as he repeated how "amazing" it was.

「How was it amazing?」(Kousuke)

Kousuke gulped nervously, Borudosu expression became serious.

「She became.. A very competent worker!」(Borudosu)

「You call that amazing?! You scared me into thinking she went berserk or something!」(Kousuke)

「No no, it was definitely amazing.. And very weird. It was too big a of gap

from the normal Viare. She was the only one in the guild that was able to work and she did every by herself you know! To the people who knew Viare, they can't help but feel awkward」(Borudosu)

「That's true, even I would doubt my eyes」(Kousuke)

Imagining the unbelievable, Kousuke couldn't help but to agree.

「The direction her personality changed could be considered a miracle instead of a disaster though. At least I thought that.」(Borudosu)

「She was that amazing I see」(Kousuke)

Kousuke laughed dryly.

Viare who was caring for the child came out of the back room. Seeing Kousuke, her body trembled. For a brief moment her eye showed signs of fear. But as she approached Kousuke the signs of fear faded and she showed a happy expression instead.

「Kousuke-san! You came! Thank you so much!」(Viare)

「I'm not sure if I can help much but I'll do my best. Anyways, it seems you were possessed by something unusual before right? You must have had a hard time」(Kousuke)

「Mm.. Even if I'm told that I don't remember what happened. I just remember doing things normally」(Viare)

Hearing her cheerful response, Kousuke knew that she didn't suffer.

「I see. I wonder if the other people are like that too」(Kousuke)

「Most likely」(Viare)

「The rest of us will become insane soon though」(Borudosu)

「Really?」(Kousuke)

「Besides you, Viare and the Tato with the "Demon Eye", the rest of us only have two or three days left. We figured this out from seeing the others' personality changing. It's a guarantee, no doubt about it. Since this is the case

only you and Viare can solve this. Unless someone comes in from outside again. When I become a victim please take my journal, I wrote down various methods to fix this」(Borudosu)

「I want to solve this before that if possible. It's better to have more manpower for this. We can't take too long since I'll eventually fall victim too」(Kousuke)

「That's right. Let's get this wrapped up as soon as possible」(Borudosu)

Kousuke suddenly recalled why he came to the guild in the first place.

「Is there a room I can stay in here? Shidi's and the other inns were full」(Kousuke)

「We just bundle up with blankets and sleep on the floor」(Borudosu)

「There's not much difference from sleeping in the halls huh. Is there a space I can sleep on?」(Kousuke)

Since it'll be the same anywhere he figured it would be best to just sleep

among the sane.

「No problem」(Borudosu)

「You'll have to prepare your own meals but the other necessities we can provide you」(Viare)

「Then I'll be in your care」(Kousuke)

Kousuke bowed towards the two.

Securing a place to sleep, Kousuke unpacked his things and spoke with the other two about what happened so far.

The incident began five days after Kousuke left the town. The first to become affected were the children, the sick and the old.

The parents of the children affected just thought it was a new game they were playing. The caretakers of the elderly thought they were just going senile. The nurses and doctors thought that the patients were just becoming scared of their conditions.

The townspeople's life went on as usual, not realizing the odd behaviors were caused by the distortion. The situation exploded and leaving the town became impossible leading to where they are now.

Borudosu was not in St. Beria at first. He was dragged into this after returning from his request. Thanks to the limited time he was being influenced by the distortion he was able to keep his sanity until now.

Tato came to this guild to get help for the people in the orphanage despite having a weak body. Tato saw that everyone was acting weird while heading to the guild, especially Viare.

Tato's "Demon Eye" was able to see the progress of the distortion. The more erratic a person's behavior became the eye showed a deeper aura coming out of the person.

The people from the orphanage were affected by Viare's strong possession so Tato didn't realize just how bad their conditions were. Tato realized the severity of the situation while heading to the guild.

Normally a child like Tato would be ignored by the adventurers, but seeing the situation and Tato's "Demon Eye" they couldn't ignore the request.

Tato and the adventurers worked together and were able to corner the source of the distortion once. During this time, Borudosu and the rest did not know the cause of all of this was due to a distortion. The source of the distortion escaped because of their negligence.

Next day, Kousuke came along to assist in the search.

Tato was being carried by another adventurer to ease some burden. Even so, Tato's body could only hold out for about four hours.

The search for the source continued like this for a few days, but Borudosu and the rest fell into insanity. Kousuke, Viare and Tato were the only ones left to resolve the situation.

「This must be the journal」(Kousuke)

Kousuke grabbed the journal from Borudosu's pocket. Borudosu didn't even notice his pocket being rummaged through, instead he kept repeating meaningless movements.

「I wonder what's written in this」(Kousuke)

Kousuke sat down on a sofa and began reading. The journal had records of his income and plans scrawled all over it. He flipped past those pages to find the relevant ones.

「Found it」(Kousuke)

Kousuke began reading the relevant entries.

It detailed on what to do after finding a distortion.

It seemed there's one necessary thing to remove a distortion. That was the knife Borudosu has. That knife was enchanted with magic to seal the distortion.
『He must have enchanted it using the guild's resources』Kousuke thought.

The knife wasn't necessary if the distortion possessed an object though. The knife was only useful if the possessed target was a living creature.

Kousuke recalled that Borudosu told him killing the possessed person would fix this as well. With this knife you wouldn't have to kill anyone. Kousuke just needed to stab the distortion after drawing out of the person and speak a specific "keyword" to fully seal it.

There were also various ways to draw the source of the distortion out of the body. The best way, it seemed, was to scare it out of the body. Shaking or

shocking the possessed target enough will expel the source.

Physical trauma will not work well though, it has to be a strong mental shock to draw it out. Giving the possessed victim a strong punch wouldn't do anything besides harm their body. The victim would have to be beaten to the last inch of their life to draw out the source this way.

The methods to draw out the source was very ambiguous at best. The fact that Borudosu and the adventurers drew it out before was probably their best chance to seal it.

Finished reading, Kousuke took Borudosu's knife from his pocket and headed to Viare and Tato.

「We're the only three left now」(Kousuke)

「We lost a lot of manpower with this... Do you think we'll be able to save everyone?」(Viare)

「We have to. If we don't this entire town will fall」(Kousuke)

Kousuke said in a depressed tone. He was suddenly bearing the fate of the entire town and it felt too heavy for him.

「We have to try harder then! You too Tato, let's do our best okay!」(Viare)

「Mhmm」(Tato)

「Anyways, let's patrol through the town like before. Can you help Tato get on my back?」(Kousuke)

Kousuke, with Viare's help, carried Tato onto his back.

The three headed out to search for the source.

Tato removed the eye patch and began observing the town. In Tato's eye, the dark aura caused by the distortion was thicker than before.

「You found it?」(Viare)

「No」(Tato)

To Viare's question Tato could only say no.

「Would it be okay to end today's search here?」(Viare)

Viare suggested seeing Tato's worsening condition. Kousuke saw that Tato's breath was uneven and considered heading back as well.

「Are you okay, should we head back?」(Kousuke)

「I can keep going for a little more」(Tato)

After searching for a little more the three headed back to the guild.

Kousuke left Tato's care to Viare and headed out once more. Even if the chances are slim he wanted to see if he can find something.

So far there's no danger despite the fruitless search for the source. The ruffians in this town were affected too and their personalities did a 180 turn. There was absolutely no crime being committed. This town became ridiculous, but he couldn't deny that it was peaceful.

Kousuke understood how a distortion was made, but he kept wondering what it really was. What's its goal? Its purpose?

In the past he was told "A distortion is just a distortion, nothing more, nothing less". The truth was, no one had a definite answer. Even the gods have no idea why these distortions exist so there's no possible way a human would know.

Suddenly, Kousuke heard someone singing out of tune. The singing could be heard from all around the town. It was disharmonious and out of tune but it was definitely a song.

「Is this a new song?」(Kousuke)

Kousuke stopped listening and headed towards the town's exit

He came to check if leaving became possible.

The scenery outside of town showed no signs of abnormality. He took a few steps forward to leave the town, but without realizing it he was walking back towards the town. He attempted this a few time with the same results, even flying didn't change anything.

He even used『Beam』but got no results. The beam would just bend downward as it approached the border and disappear into the ground.

It seemed people who were still sane could not leave, but those that fell victim could come and go as they pleased. The concern about the food supply running out disappeared when he noticed this.

The people who leave seem to become normal again but since they can't remember that anything was wrong they simply return without bringing help.

「No changes again today」(Kousuke)

He didn't feel discouraged by the situation and continued to walk along the border.

When he was about to finish his investigation he suddenly felt something's gaze on him. While working as a maid he trained his perception to a higher level. He had plenty of opportunities to train since many men would stare at

“Yui’s” beautiful appearance constantly.

He continued to walk while confirming that the gaze was following him. Kousuke turned his head towards the direction of the gaze quickly.

It seemed like there was nothing there, but in Kousuke’s eye he saw a slight disparity. A portion of the scene before him was warped. Noticing Kousuke’s stare the source of the distortion escaped.

「Didn’t Borudosu tell me that you can’t see it?」(Kousuke)

『Wouldn’t Borudosu and them be more experienced in sensing the source?』 Kousuke felt.

「How come I could sense it but they couldn’t? I understand if it’s just Borudosu alone but they were so many adventurers together so that seems unlikely...」(Kousuke)

He was convinced that they should have been able to sense it. 『That gaze, it

was obviously not hiding its presence, it was like an amateur trying to peek.』 Thought Kousuke. There was absolutely no way a professional like Borudosu would miss something like that.

『Is there a reason why it was monitoring me?』(Kousuke)

Unable to resolve this doubt, silence ensued.

Kousuke decided to be more vigilant next time around and headed back to the guild.

The next day and the day after, besides sensing the gaze from time to time there was no change in the situation. Kousuke was frustrated and weary from the lack of progress.

Unknown to Kousuke was that the source of the gaze was afraid of him.

『Welcome back, did you find anything today?』(Viare)

Viare greeted Kousuke as he returned to the guild.

「Same as usual. Is Tato alright being alone?」(Kousuke)

「Yes, Tato is currently asleep. I need to get some seasonings, do you want to come with me?」(Viare)

「Sure」(Kousuke)

The two purchased the necessary things from the store and decided to take a light walk together.

Viare turned her head towards something and slowed her walk. Kousuke didn't worry too much thinking she was just staring at something.

When the two's position became farther apart Kousuke suddenly felt an immense pressure behind him.

「WHAT!？」(Kousuke)

Kousuke dodged Viare's suddenly lunging hand. Her hand was covered with a dark haze.

Viare once again thrusted her hand towards Kousuke, he dodged once more. He kept on dodging her relentless attacks.

The attacks were very simple so Kousuke was able to dodge with ease as he tried to figure out what's happening.

『There's not much point in trying to figure this out since I have no idea where to begin! I can only assume that Viare was possessed again, just like a criminal who returns to their scene to see the results. Still though, I have no idea what this distortion is trying to do to me. Why did it suddenly appear like this now? And that dark haze, what is that? Seriously, it's just a chain of unknowns! The only thing I can deduct from this is that its afraid of me』(Kousuke)

The moment Kousuke realized it was afraid of him, Viare's face was warped with fear.

The distortion, through Viare, displayed its deep fear of Kousuke. It was afraid of Kousuke because... He's a DRAGONSLAYER.

Seeing such an overwhelming foe in front of it, its instinct told it that this

human will be the cause of its death.

The sudden monitoring and this ambush, it lost control due to extreme fear. Before this it was able to control itself, but the rising fear inside wouldn't stop growing.

Wanting to suppress its fear it decided to slam the distortion directly into Kousuke.

It never occurred to Kousuke that the reason why it was afraid of him was because he's a dragonslayer.

This was something Viare would tell him later.

Kousuke stopped his deep thinking about things he has no idea about. No point over-thinking it so he planned on what to do now.

『I have to seal this distortion now. Should I confirm with Tato first if Viare is still possessed? So I should bring her to the guild—Oh crap!?』

Viare looked like she lost her temper and summoned numerous balls of the dark haze and threw them at him.

While dodging desperately he headed towards the guild. Those dark haze looked dangerous even if it just grazed him so it made him even more desperate.

With the guild entrance in sight, Kousuke increased his pace and dashed towards Tato's room.

Tato was shocked awake from the door slamming open.

「Sorry for waking you up! Viare seems to be possessed again! I need you to confirm!」(Kousuke)

Despite being in a state of shock, Tato managed to nod.

Kousuke carried Tato up and listened carefully for noises outside the room. Confirming there was no one outside they left the room.

They snuck around slowly and spotted Viare before she found them.

Viare was guarding the guild's front entrance. Around her were numerous dark haze balls, she most likely wanted to make sure that she wouldn't miss. Compared to before the balls were smaller, quantity over quality it seemed. Still though, there were over 300 of them.

Seeing the situation outside, the two whispered to each other.

「Is she possessed?」(Kousuke)

「I can't tell, those things around big sister Ui is making it hard to see」(Tato)

「I see.....」(Kousuke)

Kousuke wanted to sigh hearing Tato's response.

He steeled his resolve knowing that there's only one thing left for him to do.

「Well then, I'll go get rid of some of those dark hazes ok? Once you can confirm if she's possessed or not just yell alright? I would feel better if you hid in the back room afterwards, but if you can't then stay still」(Kousuke)

Tato nodded. Seeing his nod Kousuke casted《Flight》on himself and flew out towards Viare at high speed.

He stopped on a spot mid-air that'll prevent Tato from being hit by a stray ball.

Viare raised her arm and pointed at Kousuke. At the same time some of the dark haze balls flew toward Kousuke.

Kousuke began dodging them in mid-air. The balls that smashed into the ground and buildings vanished but the ones that didn't hit anything returned to Viare.

「It disappeared when it hit something! Then I'll use my sword!」(Kousuke)

He unsheathed his sword and swung at a nearby ball. With no resistance, the ball scattered and vanished.

He took up a “guts pose” since his plan worked.

「I can reduce them reliable now!」(Kousuke)

Most of the balls circled around Viare so he began to chop at outlying balls. The backlash from his sharp turns and dodges were painful but he didn't stop. If he stopped at all he would be instantly surrounded.

Clothes fluttering, soaring like the wind, Kousuke would dodge and weave but was never hit directly once.

Viare seemed to panic as she gathered the remaining 200 dark haze balls around her and launched them at Kousuke. As expected, she was able to control all of them accurately.

Kousuke could only dodge now seeing the overwhelming number of dark haze balls flying toward him. While dodging, Kousuke heard Tato yelling "Big sister Ui is possessed". The moment Viare launched the rest of the balls Tato was able to clearly see the distortion possessing her.

「Only thing left to do is to seal it. AH... Not good」(Kousuke)

Kousuke made a careless move... He was completely surrounded.

Viare made a gripping motion with her hand. The dark haze balls at the same time collapsed toward Kousuke.

Kousuke concentrated and stared at the incoming threats. He then dashed toward them.

If he stayed still he would have to face all of them at the same time. Seeing that it was impossible to win that way he chose to breakthrough them instead.

Flying and swinging his sword at an incredible speed, one dark haze ball after another disappeared. But there were too many and a few managed to smash into his body.

Luckily, the intensity of each dark haze ball was low so the ten or so that smashed into his body only made him feel slightly uncomfortable.

「I BROKE THROUGH!!!」(Kousuke)

Escaping the enclosure he flew down to the ground. Right before he landed he suddenly flew back up quickly. He groaned a bit at the backlash.

The dark haze balls that chased him were unable to follow his sudden change of direction and most of them crashed into the ground.

Losing confidence, Viare absorbed the rest of the dark haze balls and tried to escape.

「Trying to run?!」(Kousuke)

Kousuke cuts off Viare's escape path and landed in front of her.

「There's only the sealing left, there no way I'll let you escape!」(Kousuke)

He shouted as he pointed his sword at Viare.

He promptly took out the sealing dagger.

Kousuke's movement suddenly stopped after that. 『I have to shock the source out.. How do I do that now?』Kousuke thought.

Feeling rushed to end this he shouted the first thing that came to his mind. Later, when he recalled this, he had no idea why he screamed that.

「I fell in love when I first saw you! Please marry me!」(Kousuke)

Kousuke's shout resounded throughout the town.

「.....」(Viare)

Viare's movement suddenly stopped.

The two stared at each other for about a minute.

『Was that a miss?』Kousuke thought as he began to feel more and more embarrassed. He hurriedly tried to think of another method to cover up his embarrassment.

Another two minutes passed and Viare suddenly shouted.



「Umm.. Ahh.. REALLY?! I um.. umm I know we've taken care of each other a lot... bu.. bu.. but... it's too soon to get married, RIGHT!? So.. so.. um... is something in between.. a friend and a lo. lo.. lover o—o—o—kay instead!？」
(Viare)

Her face was flushed red, Viare's body was releasing smoke as she flailed her arms around.

The smoke was gathering into one ball above her.

「Did I succeed??」(Kousuke)

Kousuke's stared at the smoke ball in the air with a shocked expression, not noticing that Viare was flailing about.

「Ah, I should seal this」(Kousuke)

He took out the knife once more and flew in front of the smoke ball.

He glanced at Viare, who was still saying something, to confirm that there was no more smoke coming out of her. He stabbed the smoke with the knife and spoke the “keyword”.

Kousuke didn’t understand what the “keyword” meant, most likely because he needed to study magic more.

Still though, the “keyword” worked and the smoke got sucked into the knife. The knife began to tremble once all of the smoke was absorbed. It looked like the distortion was struggling to get out. He suppressed the trembling knife and sheathed it. The scabbard had a similar sealing enchantment so with this the distortion would be double sealed. The knife quieted down after being sheathed.

「It’s done, but I don’t feel like anything changed at all」(Kousuke)

Nothing suddenly scattered out and the atmosphere didn’t change. Even the dark haze balls inside him that’s causing him to feel uncomfortable didn’t disappear.

Thinking Viare might know something he landed near her.

Viare didn't notice Kousuke approaching her nor did she respond to his call.

He gave her head a light chop to get her attention.

「How much do you have in your savings!」(Viare)

「Savings? What are you talking about?」(Kousuke)

「We need to buy a place if we're to get married! I don't mind if it's a small place as long as it's not a shack!」(Viare)

「Ah... hmm. I apologize, I'm really sorry」(Kousuke)

After he apologized he explained to her why he suddenly proposed.

「....Eh? You needed to surprise the distortion out of me, is that right?」(Viare)

With the reason sinking into her mind, Viare recalled what she just said earlier and became bright red again in embarrassment.

She cupped her red face and crouched down.

Seeing Viare's reaction, Kousuke clapped his hands together and apologized once more.

「I'm terribly sorry for the misunderstanding! It was the only thing I could come up with to surprise the distortion out of you!」(Kousuke)

「N—no, I thought that the sudden proposal was weird too! I'm so embarrassed about how I was just now!」(Viare)

“Should we both work or should I be a housewife?” “How many children should we have?” These various thoughts were floating in her mind earlier.

Viare couldn't look at Kousuke without turning red for a while because of these thoughts.

「You don't have to move, but could you listen to what I have to say?」

(Kousuke)

「Wah! Okay!」(Viare)

「I managed to seal the distortion, but the town didn't turn back to normal. I'm not certain if it's really resolved or not. Viare, do you know anything about this?」(Kousuke)

Viare took a deep breath to calm herself down and stood back up. She calmed down a bit, but her face was still bright red.

「There's some influence left. It'll probably be like this for another two days」(Viare)

「The sealing was a success though right?」(Kousuke)

「Yes. There's nothing to worry about. Most of the distortion was inside me before you drew it out and I can sense its presence in that knife」

「Its presence? You're able to sense it now? Is it because you were fully possessed by it?」(Kousuke)

「Probably. I'm sure in time I won't be able to sense it anymore. But I can

apparently do this until that happens.] (Viare)

Viare held out her hand and gathered the remnants of the distortion in the town onto her palm before she scattered them.

While the two were talking, Tato approached them seeing that it was safe.

The two took Tato back to the guild to rest. Once Viare and Tato settled down Kousuke headed out to patrol the town.

He observed the town from mid-air and proceeded towards the border to try to leave. The direction he was flying at changed a bit, but he successfully left the town.

Kousuke returned to the guild and spoke with Viare about what happened to her while she was possessed.

The first thing he asked her was about his initial doubt about the distortion's existence. From what she explained it seemed that the distortion didn't have any real goals. The feelings the distortion gave Viare was to cause mass insanity in the town, after that it had no real plan. Not having a goal, distortions were just like natural disasters.

So why did this distortion appear though? It was because the seal on it broke.

Even Viare didn't know the exact details of how that came about. The only thing she understood was that the seal broke two months ago and it was absorbing the small distortions caused by people using magic to regain its strength. Once it regained enough strength it possessed Viare and spread its influence to everyone.

Viare was just arbitrarily chosen it seemed. Yes.. A coincidence. Distortions cannot expand its influence on its own. It has to possess something first and through that object or creature's interaction with others it spreads. The reason why those influenced were just weird and ditzy was because Viare's a klutz and her personality was spread. Still, if someone that's cruel and brutal was possessed then this entire town would have been a bloodbath.

Originally, the source of the distortion buried itself deeply in Viare and waited patiently for her to spread it to everyone.

When she was possessed her mind was heavily influenced, but not fully controlled, by the distortion, now though she's completely back to normal.

There was only two times the distortion took full control of her body, when they it first met Kousuke and the fight earlier.

The distortion, through the possession, knew everything about Viare and what she knew. This was why it was afraid of Kousuke. Viare's prior knowledge of Kousuke being a dragonslayer planted the seed of fear in the distortion. If she didn't know about this then it would stayed quiet inside Viare for the entire time. Overwhelming power would not be enough to terrify it, but it thought that Kousuke knew its identity and ended up making a terrible mistake with a direct confrontation.

If another mistake had to be pointed out then it would be because the distortion possessed a living being. Distortions do not have a strong sense of ego, but by possessing Viare, her personality and ego were implanted into it. It ended up possessing human emotions, fear being among them.

By the way, Kousuke is also at fault for the distortion resurrecting. The request to move the rocks on the lawn, that rock was the seal.

That rock was there before the town was built so the townspeople had no idea that the rock there was a seal. The client for that request too had no idea.

In the end though no one could really be blamed.

Two days later, just as Viare stated, the town was beginning to recover.

With the people recovering, those who were only visiting the town immediately left and the total population of the town gradually decreased.

The town was extremely lively as if no one left though. To make up for the lost time while they were all insane everyone was extremely busy.

The leaders of every adventurer party who assisted in resolving this distortion case were gathered and explained about everything that occurred. Each group was given a reward for their assistance by the town's nobles, though it was a bit

small.

With this the cleanup for this incident was mostly done.

There was just one thing left so the Guild branch's head, Kousuke, Borudosu and Viare were currently in a meeting.

On the table, for the purpose of this meeting, the sealing knife was laid.

「So.. how should we deal with this」(Branch head)

The branch head was at a loss with what to do. Seeing him like that Viare was giving an apologetic look.

The issue lies with Viare, but she wasn't the cause of this problem either.

「I'll ask again, you don't sense it disappearing correct?」(Branch head)

「Yes」(Viare)

Viare nodded.

「Borudosu, do you know anything about this that could help?」(Branch head)

「No, I've never heard of this happening before. The distortions influence remaining.. This is the first time for me」(Borudosu)

The issue is the remaining distortion inside Viare.

Everyone in town returned to normal but the distortion in Viare hasn't disappeared yet.

The remnants of the distortion in town are all gone so she doesn't have the ability to manipulate them anymore. After some testing though Viare showed she could manipulate and use the distortion in the knife if she held it.

They thought of sending it to the capital or to Ricardo to strictly safeguard it so that Viare cannot use the distortion, but there was a possibility something terrible could happen if it was left alone.

「What's going to happen to me?」(Viare)

Viare asked as she trembled nervously.

「I would normally have to contact someone from the temple or the capital, but if I do that then you wouldn't have a pleasant life afterwards. I would prefer to not destroy the livelihood of one of my own. I feel this way and the others working here too. But, I can't just leave this as it is either」(Branch head)

One of the suggestion was to allow her to continue working while being monitored, but it was immediately rejected.

The guild is an important organization in this town and they would do everything to prevent another distortion outbreak.

「For the mean time you'll have to temporarily resign until the distortion in

you is gone」(Branch head)

「I'm fired!?」(Viare)

Viare stood up and shouted as tears began to form under her eyes.

「Calm down. I said its temporary right? Once it's gone you can immediately start working again」(Branch head)

Saying that the distortion inside her is gone would just be her word, but everyone in the guild believed that she would never lie just to get her work back.

「If you've already planned that far ahead why are we holding this meeting?」(Kousuke)

「I need help in deciding who will monitor Viare during her retirement and to act as a buffer against another possible outbreak」(Branch head)

At Kousuke's comment the head revealed the main points of the meeting.

「Therefore I was hoping to one of you two would accept this request. I want one of you to stay with her and if anything occurs to solve it yourself or report it to a nearby guild branch. I understand that monitoring her isn't an ideal thing, but leaving her alone and possibly allowing this to occur again is even more problematic」(Branch head)

「Then I will recommend Kousuke. Viare and I have a bad first impression of each other so I wouldn't be able to stand staying with her. On the other hand, Viare is close with Kousuke, to the point that he would accept her direct requests」(Borudosu)

「「What?」」(Kousuke + Viare)

Kousuke and Viare simultaneously raised their voice.

「I see, then let's go with that. He was the one that resolved this issue so if it were to occur again he should be able to easily fix it again from experience. Best regards and good luck, Watase-kun」(Branch head)

「Hey!? I can't do this suddenly!? It's not like I will be staying in this town for that long!」(Kousuke)

「Well, I'm not asking you to constantly monitor her. Just visit her frequently enough. If you're leaving the town we'll take over the monitoring for the time you're gone. If you plan on travelling together we'll pay for the expenses」(Branch head)

Kousuke was befuddled and before he could collect himself the head lowered his head and requested once more.

It was the first time someone more senior than him bowed to him. Rejecting at this point would make him feel like a villain so he nodded in agreement.

Even if Kousuke's aptitude is abnormally high, his personality was that of a normal boy his age. He was weak to being complimented by the head and Borudosu.

The head and Borudosu left the room with a cheerful expression since the case was closed and Kousuke and Viare's situation was settled.

For Kousuke and Viare, they recalled the sudden proposal from before and only glanced at each other a bit before leaving.

They head to the orphanage together to explain everything to Wei.

While explaining everything to Wei he gave an incredible comment 「Do you want to live together then?」 and left the other two completely speechless.

While the two were dealing with this turmoil the rest of the town returned to its peaceful self.

Chapter 13: Dungeon Attack!

With the distortion incident sorted, Kousuke was continuously clearing the waves of requests coming into the guild. The restoration of the town required a lot of work and the townspeople were gathering manpower to assist them through numerous guild requests.

Therefore Kousuke was not the only one with his hands full, but every other adventurer as well. Of course, most of the work went to Kousuke. His name being famous was one of the reason, but the biggest reason was because most of the requests required an enormous amount of strength and stamina that no other people besides Kousuke had.

The town was extremely busy for about a week before it started to settle down. It would most likely take another two weeks to fully restore the town though.

Viare also tagged with Kousuke as he tackled each request. Her coming along was partly to monitor her, but it was also so she could maintain a stable income. Since her forced resignation, her income became zero. Kousuke, knowing her financial situation, took her along to help her.

Unfortunately, Viare, who was unused to doing labor work, ended up constantly making mistakes. It wouldn't be a problem as long as the mistakes weren't big. Why? Because she wasn't being rewarded directly by the clients. Kousuke informed the clients ahead of time that there's no need to prepare two people's worth of the reward since she's coming along as a volunteer worker. Because she was a volunteer worker the clients gave a blind eye to her small mistakes and the slower work pace.

Viare's income was based solely on Kousuke sharing half of his rewards to her.

Knowing that she was getting paid very well, Viare would support Kousuke with the miscellaneous tasks of finding and processing requests as well as budgeting his income and spending.

The amount of work Kousuke would do would provide her with an income equivalent to half a month's worth in a week. Due to the high work load, Viare couldn't keep up for the entire week and it ended with her just following Kousuke to the work sites. She knew she wouldn't be compensated for his work for those days if she just followed, but she came anyways.

Kousuke took a day off after working hard for a week. Feeling completely refreshed after his day off, he once again headed to the guild. The townspeople still needed a lot of help. Even if they had some leeway with their expenses they had no room to relax still. The guild too couldn't slack off due to the large amount of requests still coming in.

Viare needed another day off to regain her strength so Kousuke was alone today.

In the guild, as Kousuke approached the special odd-job request board, he was stopped by a voice.

「Ah, Diane-san. Good morning」(Kousuke)

「Yes, good morning to you too」(Diane)

It was the guild staff that assisted him during his quarrel with Regulus Parlor.
She was also Viare's mentor and senior.

「That child is not with you today?」(Diane)

「She's still exhausted from the continuous work」(Kousuke)

「Ahh, that makes sense」(Diane)

She clapped lightly in acknowledgement.

「Did you stop me because you were worried about Viare?」(Kousuke)

「No, there's something I would like to ask you. Do you have any plans three

days from now?」(Diane)

「Not really」(Kousuke)

Kousuke having any plans was rare so he was able to immediately reply.

「If that's the case then I was hoping if you could accept a joint request with Borudosu-san」(Diane)

「I don't mind as long as it's not too dangerous. What kind of request is it?」(Diane)

「An investigation of a ruin. It's a ruin called Zeldan, about three days away from here by foot. Have you heard about it?」(Diane)

「No」(Kousuke)

「I see. Well, let's just leave it as that then. This request isn't about researching the origins of that ruin anyway. Zeldan was originally thought to be completely explored, but recently a hidden passage was discovered. The request is to explore the discovered passage, map it out and indicate the location and types of traps you may find in there. How about it? Will you accept?」(Diane)

「I've never done a request like this before so I'm not qualified to accept it.」
(Kousuke)

「You'll be going with Borudosu who's experienced so it should be fine.」
(Diane)

『Then isn't it better if he just goes alone?』Thought Kousuke, but he gave it a second thought. 『Is it possible, he wants me to go there?』Kousuke guessed.

「..... Is there a very dangerous monster lurking in there?」(Kousuke)

He asked further, wondering if the reason for this was because he defeated a Violent Barb.

「From prior investigations nothing of that sort was found.」(Diane)

「Then, is it possibly that the entrance caved in and you need me to dig it out?」(Kousuke)

He also asked since he always does manual labor requests.

「The entrance has already been cleared」(Diane)

Kousuke tilted his head in confusion.

「..... Then why do you need me to go?」(Kousuke)

「Borudosu-san wanted to take you along to give you some experience. To us in the guild, it would make us happy to see you become more proficient in many things」(Diane)

Kousuke felt that this was reasonable. Borudosu wanted Kousuke to accumulate some experience and broaden his horizon a bit.

It didn't seem like there was anything shady attached so Kousuke accepted.

「I understand. I'll accept the request. I just need to ask Borudosu for the details correct?」(Kousuke)

「Yes, I heard you two were staying in the same inn so you could ask him for the details later tonight or tomorrow」(Diane)

The two's conversation ended and Kousuke headed back to the special odd-job notice board and grabbed a few more requests.

Later that evening after finishing his requests, Kousuke was heading towards the dining area in the inn. Today's dinner was lasagna with perfectly cooked cheese, consommé soup, and orange sorbet. A hard day's worth of work, an empty stomach and the amazing aroma, Kousuke was ready to devour his fill.

After finishing dinner and returning the tray, he stopped his feet as he was nearing the dining area's exit.

「Borudosu!」(Kousuke)

「Hey Kousuke! You were getting dinner too?」(Borudosu)

「Yea. I just finished eating. I'll be heading to your room later. We need to talk about the joint request right?」(Kousuke)

「Ahh, so you heard」(Borudosu)

「Are you staying in the same room as before?」(Kousuke)

「It's the same. I'll try to eat quickly then」(Borudosu)

「It's fine, just take your time」(Kousuke)

Kousuke went back to his room after his small chat with Borudosu.

He did some light studying and made preparations to enter the bath before heading to Borudosu's room.

Kousuke knocked on Borudosu's door. He heard "Come in" and entered the room.

「Take a seat on the bed for now. We'll be doing a joint request but do you know what you'll be doing?」(Borudosu)

「Explore and map the ruin, locate and mark traps and exterminate any monsters?」(Kousuke)

「Mm, that's about it. This will be the first time you'll be taking a request like this right?」(Borudosu)

「It's my first time so I'll probably be useless」(Kousuke)

「This is something I already accounted for, no need to worry. We need to prepare for the journey, can you make some free time tomorrow or the day after tomorrow?」(Borudosu)

「I don't have anything planned so either days' work」(Kousuke)

「Alright, let's buy the stuff tomorrow then. Are you alright with money?」(Borudosu)

「Mhmm, the money Alice gave me and my current savings will let me stay at this inn for another two months. Is that enough?」(Kousuke)

「More than enough. We'll buy the stuff tomorrow then」(Borudosu)

「Got it. Which reminds me, can I bring Viare along to the ruins as well?」(Kousuke)

It seemed unlikely, but he wanted to make sure.

「That's probably not a good idea. If Viare was aiming to become an adventurer than it would be a different story though」(Borudosu)

「I don't think I've ever heard anything like that about her. I was just asking so you don't have to think too much about it. Ah, one more thing. Are we walking there?」(Kousuke)

「We are. Would that be an issue? I can get some horses if it's a problem」(Borudosu)

「I've never ridden a horse before so I'll pass. Since I can use magic I figured I could fly to reduce the travel time」(Kousuke)

「Are you able to fly while carrying me?」(Borudosu)

「I'm pretty sure I'll be fine. When I flew with a heavy luggage before I didn't waver or lose speed」(Kousuke)

「That reminds me, elder sister would carry me and fly around when I was young」(Borudosu)

Borudosu showed an expression emitting nostalgia.

「During our travel there we'll have to climb over a mountain and travel through a river so flying over those parts would be a good idea」(Borudosu)

「It's fine if I just fly for those places only?」(Kousuke)

「Yea, let's do that」(Borudosu)

With the conversation wrapped up Kousuke headed to the bathhouse then retired back to his room.

The following morning after the two ate breakfast, they headed to the orphanage and informed Viare they will be leaving town for a while on a request. Afterwards, Kousuke and Borudosu began to purchase supplies for the journey.

Around lunchtime they finished their shopping and separated. Borudosu had some work to do until tomorrow afternoon.

Kousuke returned to the inn to drop off the supplies. After dropping everything off he was about to head out to the guild but he was stopped by Shidi. She wanted him to accept her delivery request. She needed some documents delivered to Ricardo. Since he told her he learned how to use

teleportation magic she felt that this was a perfect opportunity.

Normally, a delivery done with teleportation magic is very expensive, but since the two didn't know the market price it ended up becoming 20% of the regular price. When the guild receptionists heard about this he received a lecture from them since it was too cheap.

Time flew by and the appointed day arrived. Kousuke and Borudosu both left together on time and are currently standing before the ruins.

The journey here was rather eventless. Because they flew over the mountain and river, the two were able to cut half a day's worth of travel time.

While flying though, they were hit with a strong gust and it caused Kousuke to stagger. Borudosu turned deathly pale in fear from that. Other than that, only two weak monsters appeared so their travel was relatively peaceful.

It was Kousuke's first time using his sword in a month. Finding that out, Borudosu poked fun at Kousuke saying "How are we in the same profession if you're like that?".

The ruin was partially buried in a hill so the two could only see a part of it sticking out on the right side of the hill. To begin with, the discovery of this ruin was due to an earthquake revealing it.

The group that first discovered the ruin had to rope down from a crack to enter it. Many years have passed since then so a stair was built which would allow

Kousuke and Borudosu an easy entry.

This ruin, based off the many years of research, was concluded to be a temple for one of this world's god. The temple had a lot of historical value based off the various journals and documents left by the original denizens. Everything of monetary value was stripped already so it was deemed a "dried ruin" by adventurers. The only things left were some old furniture and faded murals.

「Are you two the adventurers sent by the guild?」(???)

The guild personnel that was camped near the ruin approached the two.

「Yea, I'm Borudosu and this fella's Kousuke. The two of us are here to investigate the ruin」(Borudosu)

「Would the two of you like to rest here tonight and enter the ruin tomorrow?」(Guild personnel)

「Sure, we don't mind」(Borudosu)

「Then please follow me to the tent we have prepared for you」(Guild

personnel)

The two rested for the evening to remove their fatigue from the journey. The following morning they prepped their gears and headed into the ruin.

The interior was damp and cold compared to outside. The reason for this was because the earthquake exposed a waterway, submerging a portion of the temple.

The entrance to the temple was lit up by the sunlight coming in, but the deeper portions of it were pitch black.

「Should I use magic to brighten up the area around us?」(Kousuke)

「Do you mind?」(Borudosu)

Kousuke casted《Light》twice, once on himself and once on Borudosu. Just like how Horun taught him, he summoned numerous light spheres around them.

「We don't have to map this area right?」(Kousuke)

Kousuke asked as he gripped the clipboard and sheet.

「We only need to map the newly discovered area」(Borudosu)

Borodosu, who knew where the new area was, took the lead.

The path to the new area had no monsters nor traps. For Kousuke, it gave him the opportunity to observe the surrounding in a relaxed manner.

The temple was eerily quiet and gave the sensation that causing a ruckus was disallowed. It reminded Kousuke of his school field trip to a temple back on Earth.

「This is it」(Borudosu)

「It really doesn't look it was recently opened huh...」(Kousuke)

The passageway in front of the two was found when a wall was broken, but there were no debris from the breakage in sight. The edges of the broken wall didn't seem recently broken either.

「It was probably cleaned up to make it easier to walk through. Let's be careful from this point on though」(Borudosu)

「Okay」(Kousuke)

The two entered the passage and began their investigation of the first room. Still.. It wasn't any different from the rest of the temple.

「A door to the left, check. I wonder if I'm doing this right...」(Kousuke)

Kousuke showed Borodosu what he drew since Borodosu knew more than Kousuke about mapping.

「That's fine for now. Just draw it a bit lighter so you can make corrections later in case its wrong」(Borudosu)

「Got it」(Kousuke)

Borudosu approached the door to the left. He began observing the door's surrounding as he tapped and moved it a bit.

After confirming the door's status he called Kousuke over.

「This door is rigged with a trap. It's not lethal, just at the level of a prank」(Borudosu)

「Mhmm mhmm」(Kousuke)

「So even if we fail to disarm this it won't cause much damage. So... try disarming it」(Borudosu)

「That's impossible! I don't know how to examine and disarm traps!」(Kousuke)

「It'll be a good experience for you! Just inspect it carefully, you'll be fine」
(Borudosu)

After proclaiming something absurd he stepped away from the door.

Kousuke sighed despondently and approached the door.

He stared at it blankly, not knowing what to do. He began to mimic what Borudosu just did to see if that might help.

『Touching this wooden door didn't help.. Tapping the door didn't help.. Examining around the door didn't help....』(Kousuke)

After his fruitless investigation, the only spot left to check was the top of the door. Though wasteful, he used his flight magic to float above the door to examine it.

「Is this it? Hey Borudosu, I see a plank stuck between the wall and the door, do I take it out?」(Kousuke)

「Correct! Give it a shot」(Borudosu)

The space between the door and the wall was too small for his hand so he pushed the plank in further with his sword.

Suddenly, a clanging sound on the other side of the door resounded.

「Wha.. WHAT!?」(Kousuke)

Kousuke trembled at the sound and turned around toward Borudosu.

Borudosu on the other hand had a calm expression as if everything was going according to plan.

「You'll understand once you open the door」(Borudosu)

When he opened the door he saw a bucket and plank on the floor. It was.. Just a prank to drop a bucket on your head when you open the door.

「Ah.. So this is what you meant by a prank」(Kousuke)

It's just like grade school prank, placing a chalkboard eraser on the sliding door.

「Like I said, a prank level trap. It'll only scare you when the bucket drops. Of course, if the bucket was filled with something dangerous then it could easily become lethal. This trap has one more role, can you see it?」(Borudosu)

「Another role?」(Kousuke)

Kousuke tilted his head in confusion.

「An alarm against intruders」(Borudosu)

「Oh...」(Kousuke)

「A method to deal with a similar trap like this is to use a silencing magic before triggering it or if you can find another way in use that instead. Simple right? It's a simple type of trap but it gets triggered easily so it's rather troublesome. Well, even if something heard it now it would probably just be a few monsters so as an alarm it's pretty useless」(Borudosu)

『We'll be fighting them anyways so no big deal』Thought Borudosu as he nonchalantly answered.

Beyond the door were two hallways. The right hallway was only ten meters long with a door at the end of it. The left hallway was much longer and their light spheres couldn't illuminate to its end.

They proceeded down the shorter, right hallway and began investigating the door.

「I don't think there are any traps on this door. I'll open it」(Borudosu)

Borudosu carefully opened the door. He was careful just in case he overlooked a trap.

With no mistake in his judgment, the door opened without any incident.

「Hmm, there's nothing in here either」(Borudosu)

「So let's head to the next room then」(Kousuke)

The two proceeded in further.

Suddenly, Borudosu stopped making Kousuke freeze as well.

His gaze was glued towards the ground.

「It's a pitfall」(Borudosu)

「Ah, the floor color does look different」(Kousuke)

The hall being dark definitely made it difficult to see, but Kousuke didn't notice it at all until it was pointed out.

It would be noticeable if it were brighter, but in this dark hall it was nearly invisible. This showed the experience gap between Borudosu and Kousuke.

As Borudosu tapped the ground with his axe, the false floor gave away and exposed the pitfall.

「Traps being set in these kind of hallways are very common so never relax. Got it?」(Borudosu)

「Yes」(Kousuke)

The two proceeded further as they avoided the pitfall.

This time, Kousuke showed his vigilance.

He noticed a tripwire trap in front of him and stepped over it.

The moment he did the floor suddenly sunk a bit and felt something crashing onto his head. It was a barrel.

「It's a double trap. The first one was meant to lower your guard once you

avoid it. By the way, you would have noticed the second one if you just looked at the ceiling」(Borudosu)

Looking towards where Borudosu pointed, the ceiling showed signs of the barrel being rigged there.

「The reason why you fell for it was because of the pitfall trap earlier, you were too focused on the ground. Traps could be rigged anywhere so you have to carefully observe your entire surrounding」(Borudosu)

Since it wasn't a dangerous trap, Borudosu once again, reminded Kousuke to be more vigilant. Borudosu was hoping Kousuke would learn from experiencing this.

「Somehow.. I feel there's so much to learn」(Kousuke)

「It's good you're learning this before it gets complicated. C'mon, let's keep going」(Borudosu)

Kousuke followed Borudosu who took the lead once more.

The hall had a bend up ahead and as they made that turn a door was visible.

「This door, we need a key. I'll be opening the door soon but keep this in mind when you try the same thing, don't look through the keyhole directly. Needles or other harmful substances might shoot out of it」(Borudosu)

Borudosu took out his lock picks, looked into the keyhole with a mirror then proceeded to pick the lock.

The process made a lot of clinking noises before the door was quickly opened

Kousuke's mouth was agape in astonishment.

「It's probably a bit late to say this but.. You know how to do quite a lot. How should I say this? I always thought you were just a combat specialist」(Kousuke)

Kousuke's conclusion of Borudosu's ability could be blamed by the fact that Borudosu has the《Berserker》gift.

But that gift was the cause of him being so well-rounded. Borodosu had trouble finding others to group with because of that gift so he had to learn to do everything alone.

These various techniques were taught to him by Alice.

「When I just became an adventurer I was viewed as a liability by others since I didn't have the “Survivor” title. So I had to learn how to pick locks and avoid traps by myself. After doing it so many times I became quite skilled. Still, it's not too bad these days since I can find groups for requests with little to no combat」(Borudosu)

Borudosu handed the mirror and the lock picks over. Kousuke just stared blankly at him. He had no idea why he was given these.

「Why are you giving me these?」(Kousuke)

「I'm going to go in and lock the door, try unlocking it yourself. You probably

have no idea how so just wiggle it around randomly」(Borudosu)

Borudosu quickly entered and locked the door.

Kousuke tried to imitate Borudosu and began his lock picking attempt. Suddenly, he noticed a difference between the lock and the door. Both were old, but they seemed to be different in how old they were. Thinking he was just imagining it he continued his work.

The sound of metal clinking continued for five minutes. It was impossible to pick the lock with just random attempts.

Kousuke, fed up, pulled the lock pick out and smashed the door.

「You gave up a lot faster than I expected」(Borudosu)

「I don't have the knack for these kind of things so its impossible」(Kousuke)

「I guess that's true. It's also true that just doing it randomly would work sometime too. Well, when we get back let's borrow some practice material from the guild. I'll show you the ropes」(Borudosu)

「We can borrow something like that?」(Kousuke)

「They have one set they can loan out. You can even practice setting and disarming traps too. In the end though it's just practice. The tension and the fulfilling feeling of getting through it out in the field is incomparable. Plus, people without experience tend to mess up when it matters regardless of how much they practice」(Borudosu)

They added more to the map and proceeded deeper. They travelled all over, finding cellars, secret rooms and more. The map progressively became larger and clearer.

There were very little monsters too. Cowardly rat monsters and fish monsters in submerged rooms. They ignored the fish monsters since going in the water was pointless.

As they proceeded deeper, Kousuke became better at finding and disarming traps. There was even a trap that released magic, but he left it alone.

It was because Borudosu told Kousuke to avoid those type of traps if he isn't confident in disarming them.

Eventually, the complexity of the traps increased to the point that Borudosu couldn't disarm them. Some simply triggered because they got too close.

「Danger?!」(Kousuke)

Many arrows would fly out of the walls at them.

「Hothothot!!!」(Kousuke)

And dragon-like statues breathed fire at them.

「AHHH!?」(Kousuke)

And the two would slip and fall on oil-slicked ramps.

「Just break the damn ceiling!」(Borudosu)

And the two would break out of sealed rooms with falling ceilings by bashing it open. Such thrilling experiences the two were forced to share.

Among their “experiences” was a trap beyond the level of a prank that almost claimed their lives. A floodgate opened and a torrent of acid poured out forcing the two to desperately flee for their lives.

To make matters worse, they didn’t trigger this trap, a rat monster did in passing. The torrent of acid melted the monsters it touched, but the two had no time to watch such a grotesque scene.

「..... Something feels off」(Kousuke)

Kousuke spoke after successfully escaping the acid trap.

「What’s wrong?」(Borudosu)

「Whatever the circumstance might be, this volume of traps is weird. And they’re consistently getting worse too」(Kousuke)

「Really now? Well, we're probably close to the end so let's just finish this up quickly」(Borudosu)

Looking at the overall progress of the map it really did look like it was almost complete.

Kousuke, still not convinced, followed Borudosu into a spacious room. In the middle of this room was a giant quadruped. It was as tall as Borudosu and was about four meters long from head to tail. It glared at the two as it drooled slovenly like it was starved.

「OH C'MON! This is even more wrong! Look at that cage! Its more dismantled than destroyed!」(Kousuke)

It would make sense if something like that broke out of the cage, but the bars only had small scratches, showing that there was no way this beast broke its way out.

Everything about this looked planned and artificial.

「You should focus on the monster before anything else right now!」
(Borudosu)

Kousuke agreed and drew his sword. The two stood their ground against the monster.

The two effortlessly won the battle in a quick fashion. That monster was stronger than what they've encountered in the ruin so far, but it was something Borudosu could easily handle alone.

「Kousuke」(Borudosu)

「Yes?」(Kousuke)

Kousuke who was observing the “broken” cage was called by Borudosu who was dismantling the monster.

「This time you don't seem so regretful, did you get used to it?」(Borudosu)

『He's probably thinking about the first time I killed a Lutz Monkey』Kousuke thought.

『I'm.. Pretty sure I'm not used to it, but this time around, since it was a larger monster, I felt the danger to myself was greater than my sense of guilt』
(Kousuke)

『Danger to yourself? That monster wasn't THAT strong you know?』
(Borudosu)

『That ferocious monster lived and grew to that size, it was the first time seeing something like that for me you know. It didn't make me feel threatened with its actual strength, it made me feel threatened with its appearance』
(Kousuke)

『You should have been able to tell it was weak by its aura』(Borudosu)

『Forget about that for a second, take a look at this』(Kousuke)

Kousuke picked up a piece of the cage.

「There are some signs that the monster attacked the cage, but it really doesn't look like the cage was broken by that monster. It's as if someone scattered it with one blow. Perhaps someone is hiding in this area. The insane volume of traps from before would make sense if that's the case.」

「That's incorrect. Hideouts usually have the basic needs covered right? Have you seen any food or water around?」(Borudosu)

Kousuke searched his memory before shaking his head.

「If it's not a hideout then who was taking care of this monster? It was too energetic and there's no food and water, it can't possibly be that ancient.」(Kousuke)

「I also think the same. Ignoring the increasing complexity of the traps, I wonder what were the guild personnel thinking.」(Borudosu)

「People from the guild?」(Kousuke)

「Since we explored everything already it's probably fine to expose it now.」(Borudosu)

Borudosu explained everything as they headed for the exit.

The area the two explored today was actually already explored many years ago. So why was Borudosu and Kousuke given this exploration request? It was to give Kousuke some experience as Borudosu originally said. The guild's expectation was to rapidly improve Kousuke's talents by making him train on a "live field".

Kousuke was doubtful as to the necessity of all this, but also understood that they had very high expectations out of him.

The guild put an enormous amount of effort in producing this "training dungeon" for Kousuke. It was worth it in their eye since if a problem arose in this dungeon and a rescue was required, they could "recommend" it to Kousuke who would definitely complete it.

「So it was just training using a real dungeon. Not knowing about this kept my tension up and it really did feel like the real deal. I understand this but, how could they call this practice with those death traps they left here!」(Kousuke)

Kousuke just couldn't comprehend this.

The acid trap wasn't the only lethal one. The magic trap they ignored actually releases『Water Cutter』and there were even poison coated steel wires placed in a few spots.

「Even I wasn't given all the details. I was just requested to take you here and explore together with you. They told me they set up some traps, but to this extent.. I didn't expect that. There are a few guild personnel just outside so let's ask them」(Borudosu)

The reply they got from them was "We got too into it".

The traps weren't set up by the guild but by an expert they hired. Since the expert was allowed to work to his heart's content he went a bit overboard. The guild personnel were deeply impressed by the expert's performance and forgot to stop him, leading to those lethal traps being set.

In fact, these guild personnel were looking forward to the two tripping on the traps.

「ARE!! YOU!! IDIOTS!? WE COULD HAVE DIED!」(Borudosu)

Hearing Borudosu's scream, the guild personnel's faces paled at this realization.

Their heads looked like they would fly off as they kept bowing in apology.

Kousuke smiled dryly at this scene.

With this, Kousuke's first "Dungeon Attack" ended up becoming something more difficult than originally planned.

Still, he learned a lot from this since its degree of difficulty was very high. It was certain that his future dungeon explorations would be easier thanks to today's events.

Otherwise it would have been a waste of time for Borudosu who was partially dragged into the same mess.

Chapter 14: The Old Hero Visits a Foreign Land!

「Isn't it heavy? Want me to carry some for you?」(???)

The man in his early 40's asked Kousuke for the third time. To that, Kousuke returned the same answer.

「I'm not having a tough time so don't worry about it」(Kousuke)

「Even if you tell me that... I still think it's too heavy for you」(???)

The man's face twisted as he looked at Kousuke and what he's carrying behind him.

Everyone else around the two had a similar expression. The only person who was calm was Borudosu.

Kousuke was carrying the heaviest thing alone in the group. He was pulling a fully packed cart that would normally require two horses to pull with an absolutely calm expression. It was a scene a normal person would completely doubt.

The reason why Kousuke is pulling the cart alone is a story from two hours ago.

On their way back, just three hours away from town, Borudosu and Kousuke saw a gathering of people ahead.

「What's going on here?」(Kousuke)

「Maybe their carts' wheel broke off?」(Borudosu)

They approached the group and confirmed that there was nothing wrong with the carts.

The group ran into some bad luck. A mob of monsters attacked them and the

horses that were originally pulling the carts are either dead or heavily wounded.

They had some people capable of fighting the monsters, but the enemy was too great in number and they couldn't protect the horses.

「We treated the horses that are still alive, but now we're stranded because we don't have enough horses to pull all of the carts. We could manually pull the carts and bring most of them with us, but we would have to leave a few」(???)

「I see. If that's what happened then we'll help. Kousuke, think you can pull that cart over there alone?」(Borudosu)

Borudosu pointed at the heavily packed luggage cart.

He questioned in a doubtful sounding manner, but he was 100% confident Kousuke could do it.

「I won't know unless I try, but it should be ok, probably」(Kousuke)

「No, that's impossible! One horse wasn't enough to pull it and two just barely got it to move!」(???)

「I'll give it a try at least」(Kousuke)

Kousuke crouched with his back facing the cart, grabbed the bottom of the cart, and pulled. Just as Borudosu and Kousuke expected, the cart moved.

「It's not heavy so it's alright. This position is a bit uncomfortable though」(Kousuke)

「Wooow, this is a big surprise! You're quite strong aren't you?」(???)

The man exclaimed, his face mixed with shock and awe.

「I'm just a bit stronger than most」(Kousuke)

「You call that a bit stronger?!」(???)

The man brought a rope and ties it to the cart Kousuke's pulling to act as a handle.

He confirmed the rope won't unfurl and watched in awe once more at Kousuke's immense strength pulling the cart.

The group, no longer stranded, proceeded to move towards St. Beria.

Borudosu was also pulling a different cart with a few people, displaying that his strength is also abnormally high.

Kousuke conversed with the man besides him to learn more about their group as he leisurely pulled the cart.

They were a troupe that does acrobatics to theatrical plays, travelling around various countries on a fixed schedule to perform. This month their destination to perform was St. Beria.

It was a mid-sized troupe with 35 people. The man Kousuke was speaking with is called Randolph, the chairman. Their dream is to perform in a big city and make it big. Randolph's eyes sparkled brightly as he spoke with Kousuke about it.

「Thank you so much for your help」(Randolph)

Having reached St. Beria, Randolph bowed in gratitude towards Kousuke and Borudosu.

The rest of the troupe members were setting up tents to prepare for the evening.

「We were heading the same way so you don't have to worry about it. Plus, it didn't really tire me out」(Kousuke)

「Yea, that's right. Walking back normally would have been the same for us」(Borudosu)

The two weren't lying, neither were tired at all.

「You two carried all of that.. I would have preferred to hear you were tired. It makes us feel depressed thinking that we're very weak」(Randolph)

「To us adventurers, strength is our capital!」(Borudosu)

「Even the adventurers I know aren't unbelievably strong as you two you know? For your assistance, I'll have the admission fees waived for you two and your family, friends and lovers. Please come by all means. In addition, I'll provide the best seats on the house!」(Randolph)

The two told Randolph they'll be looking forward to it and entered the town. They went straight to the guild. They want to hand in the ruin exploration results and begin practicing lock picking.

「Welcome back you two. It seems you two returned earlier than expected」(Diane)

Diane, who was on break, saw the two as she returned to the guild and called out to them.

「We're back」(Kousuke)

「We've returned. We were able to finish quickly since Kousuke carried me and flew over the mountain and river」(Borudosu)

「Ah that's right, he's able to use flight magic. Reducing travel time with that is definitely possible」(Diane)

「I can travel even faster next time around with teleportation magic. If a reason for me to go comes up that is」(Kousuke)

「You can use teleportation magic too I see」(Diane)

Diane was surprised at Kousuke's statement.

「I learned it recently. It's short ranged and I can't bring anyone with me though」(Kousuke)

「But you're able to make delivery trips to Ricardo correct?」(Diane)

「I've already done that before for someone I know」(Kousuke)

「I.. See... You've become quite the handy person」(Diane)

「What do you mean by “Handy”?」(Borudosu)

Hearing Diane's muttering, Borudosu chimed in playfully.

「Teleportation magic is a very handy. There was currently only one person who could use teleportation magic in this town. Having another one in town would make for a very happy occasion.」(Diane)

「The only places I can teleport to at the moment are Ricardo, Zeldan and the Western Hollows though.」(Kousuke)

「Just being able to teleport to Ricardo will allow you to complete most delivery requests we receive with ease.」(Diane)

Requests using teleportation magic were originally monopolized by that one person. Kousuke was initially afraid his presence would cause a disturbance, but heard later that the other individual was already married, had children who grew up and left the home, and had a fortune saved up already. Rather, that person would prefer less requests going to him so he could visit his grandchildren more often.

Of course, Kousuke taking all of the requests would be problematic, but Kousuke has no intention of doing that so there should be no issues at all.

Diane's break ended and the two headed to the reception to turn in the request.

They finished the paperwork and received their reward. When Kousuke received the reward he stared at it with an unconvinced look.

「... It was for training but I still got a reward」(Kousuke)

「On the surface it was a request after all, it's only normal to receive some sort of reward. Keep what you can get for now, thinking like that isn't too bad right?」(Borudosu)

「Yea, I'll keep that in mind」(Kousuke)

He stowed the money away into his bag and headed to the practice lock area.

The guild limited who was allowed to practice lock picking techniques on site. There's a possibility that there are those with malicious intent within the crowd so only those who pass a certain set of criteria may utilize the guild's lock picking training.

The individual requires the approval of the majority of the guild staff, a recommendation from someone who's already approved, and a binding contract that would force the person providing the recommendation to be responsible for the applicant in case he/she uses the training for evil. These three conditions must be met.

Borudosu was currently signing that contract.

There were seven locks placed in front of Kousuke by Borudosu with the complexity increasing from right to left.

「If you can unlock all seven of these then you'll be able to open most locks without trouble. Most locks that exist are variants of these seven locks. If you see a lock that isn't similar to one of these seven locks then it's probably rigged with magic. There are some uniquely made locks that can't be picked easily though so it's best to just make sure there's no traps on it and bash it open. That's what I did when I had to deal with one. This is the unique lock by the way」(Borudosu)

Borudosu pointed at the lock fourth from the right.

「You broke and brought back that lock?」(Kousuke)

「If you bring back a lock with a unique mechanism to the guild, they'll buy it off you for quite a bit」(Borudosu)

The reasons? It's profitable for the guild and business owners love to see possible improvements to the safety of their possessions.

If it's brought back to the guild, they'll replicate it with the help of a locksmith and sell it to business owners. It's roughly the same if it's brought to a large business as well.

Most adventurers would elect to hand it into the guild though. The large businesses would only provide monetary rewards while the guild provide money as well as an increase to their adventurer rank.

「Let's practice one at a time, for now just watch」(Borudosu)

Borudosu began unlocking the locks one at a time from the easiest to hardest.

The easiest one was opened instantly with just one lock pick while the hardest one took ten minutes and three lock picks to open. Borudosu already practiced using these locks before so he was opening them faster than most would.

Despite that, the hardest one still took some time.

「.....That about wraps up the demonstration. Start with the easiest one first. You just need to stick this lock pick in and twist a bit to open it. Just keep in mind the position of the lock pick's tip.」(Borudosu)

The locks were reset and Borudosu gave Kousuke the keys and lock picks.

「Once you put in the lock pick you should be able to tell when to twist when you feel it get stuck a bit. Twist when you do and it should open.」(Borudosu)

「Ah, it opened. This one opened too easily, isn't that a bit unreliable as a lock?」(Kousuke)

「This lock is used to keep a container sealed from leaking. It's not meant to keep people out.」(Borudosu)

With the two flinging questions and answers back and forth the lock picking training continued.

After an hour the two stopped talking. During that hour, Kousuke became skilled enough to be able to smoothly open up to the fourth lock. At the pace he was going at, the remaining three locks would be easily opened as well.

「I taught you everything I know. You should be able to do it all alone now」(Borudosu)

「Thank you. But what about magic-based locks?」(Kousuke)

「Magic-based locks.. Well it's pointless to try to unlock them」(Borudosu)

「Why?」(Kousuke)

「Each of them have different conditions to open so the things you learned today won't help in any way. Most of them do not even have a keyhole. The ones I've opened so far I had to sometimes burn it, douse it in water or use an object that the lock was paired with. The only advice I can give you about magic-based locks is to not miss any hints about it. Any information about it in others' memos or from the condition of the lock can prove to be indispensable. If you want more details just ask someone from the guild, they should have some reference books for it」(Borudosu)

「I'll take a look some other time then」(Kousuke)

The two left the training room and saw Randolph at the counter.

「Randolph-san?」(Kousuke)

「Ooh! The two of you were here as well I see!」(Randolph)

「Yes, we had some business to attend to here. Did Randolph-san come here to have a request set up?」(Kousuke)

「Yes, I require some construction assistance」(Randolph)

「Oh, well, maybe I should accept it then」(Kousuke)

Kousuke asked the guild receptionist to prepare the paperwork.

「I would appreciate the help of someone as strong as you Watase-san, but is that fine?」(Randolph)

「It's not that different from the usual requests I accept though」(Kousuke)

「Speaking of adventurers, I've always thought they would aim for requests with thrills and high rewards. Aren't these type of requests usually taken by adventurers who lack funds or have too much free time? If you're short on money I do not mind providing a reward for your previous assistance」(Randolph)

「This guy tries to avoid dangerous things and always does these types of mundane tasks. Because of that, there's no one who fully understands his abilities」(Borudosu)

The guild is troubled with Kousuke since they cannot tell what his limits are.

「Haa... Is that so? If it's not troublesome for you to accept then I look forward to working with you tomorrow」(Randolph)

Randolph lowered his head.

Kousuke also informed Randolph that he plans on bringing Viare along as a volunteer worker.

Noticing Randolph's confused look, Kousuke explained to him why Viare is

coming as a volunteer worker. Borudosu and Kousuke left the guild building after.

The following day, Kousuke and Viare headed to where the troupe was camped.

Randolph and his crew were already setting up the stages when they arrived. The two received various tasks and began their work.

Kousuke assisted with the construction and Viare handled babysitting, cooking and other day-to-day tasks for the troupe's family. Randolph gave Viare her current tasks because she looked the part and would unlikely make a mistake.

There were other adventurers that accepted this request as well. Around five of them could be seen working alongside the troupe members.

The troupe was planning on doing a play so rather than an encompassed circus stage, a theater stage was being built.

Before anything else, the theater stage was first completed. The actors immediately began their rehearsals upon its completion.

They weren't rehearsing to memorize lines since they've done that already while travelling. Instead, they were rehearsing the actions on the stage. Randolph could be seen on the side giving directions to the actors.

Kousuke was watching them rehearse while hammering stakes into the ground.

Before long, lunchtime came and Viare, who finally got her break, called out to Kousuke.

「It's break time, Kousuke-san」(Viare)

「Roooger that!」(Kousuke)

Dropping the stake he had in his hand, Kousuke accepted the invitation.

「What's on the menu today?」(Kousuke)

「Sandwich, ground meat and vegetable soup, and some fruits」(Viare)

There were many people crowding the table and already eating lunch.

The two mixed into the crowd to get lunch. The actors stopped their rehearsals as well and joined in.

Randolph approached Kousuke after noticing him.

「How's the food? Does it match your palate?」(Randolph)

「It's definitely not a local taste. I quite like it」(Kousuke)

Most of the sandwiches were prepared with various spices and gave Kousuke an opportunity to try varied, spicy flavors.

When the spiciness of the sandwiches became too rich, Kousuke ate the mild-flavored soup and fruits to cleanse his palate.

「Is that so? Good, good!」(Randolph)

Randolph nodded happily as he began eating.

The two began to discuss about the troupe. Kousuke was curious about the play's story.

「"The Bride of Rudbeckia", are you familiar with this book?」(Randolph)

「AH! I heard about it! It was read to me when I was a child」(Viare)

Since Viare seemed to know she began explaining the story to the clueless looking Kousuke.

「The story's about the son and daughter of two noble houses that had bad blood between each other」(Viare)

Hearing the summary, Kousuke felt the premise of the story was similar to "Romeo and Juliet".

As he heard more details, he concluded it was only roughly similar. Kousuke

wasn't too familiar with "Romeo and Juliet" so in the end he didn't care much for the difference. He was just satisfied hearing the summary of it.

「Honestly, I wanted to show a more grandiose play for our audience」
(Randolph)

「What do you mean by grandiose? Do you mean a more lively story or a more boisterous production?」(Kousuke)

「It would be the production. I would like to do both though」(Randolph)

「Could you give me an example of such story?」(Kousuke)

「Let's see..... The story about Hero Theclatocs vanquishing a fire giant is one」
(Randolph)

「Theclatocs?」(Kousuke)

Viare and Randolph showed a shocked expression at Kousuke.

「You don't know? He's quite a famous figure though」(Viare)

「Well... I'm still in the process of studying various things」(Kousuke)

「I have a copy of the book at home, I'll lend it to you later」(Viare)

Kousuke nodded at Viare's offer.

「The story is about Theclatocs's journey to vanquish the giant that has been terrorizing the people, as you've probably guessed. His journey was a perilous one and his battle with the giant even more, with great flames of explosions spreading everywhere. He barely wins by giving it his all. Something around this」(Viare)

「It sounds like something boys would love to hear」(Kousuke)

「I agree. It's very popular among the boys. I was hoping our venue could be something original and flashy like that. Sadly, it's difficult to find something similar」(Randolph)

Randolph shook his head "dejectedly". Seeing no sense of resignation, it's safe to assume he was still hoping deep inside himself that it will one day become a reality.

While the three rambled on, the break was over.

The afternoon's task was to prepare the seating area for the audience by removing the grass and pebbles. Kousuke kept thinking about Randolph's hope for a flashy play as he cleared the field non-stop.

「I haven't seen a play since I was a kid.」Kousuke thought while bathing himself in nostalgia. He recalled when his parents took him to a "Hero Show" at an amusement park when he was a child.

Then he realized something. Why not let them perform a "Hero Show"? It fitted Randolph's criteria of flashy AND original (for this world). Furthermore, this world has magic that can do all the SFX so it looked possible. He truly wanted to see something like that here. The scene of the hero's explosive kick floated into his mind and Kousuke became impatient.

「Kousuke-san? Why did you stop working?」(Viare)

Viare, who was weeding alongside him, asked.

「Ah, sorry sorry!」(Kousuke)

「It looked like you were smiling really happily.. Is weeding really fun for you?」
(Viare)

「No no! I just thought of something small, that's all」(Kousuke)

Viare tilted her head seeing Kousuke in an unusually good mood.

In the end, Kousuke's mood was brimming with happiness even after the work was done.

The ground that was cleared of grass and stones was raised by a troupe's mage with the most mana to produce a fan-shaped slope. The slope would be where the audience would be seated.

With everything done, the construction request was complete. Decorations and the likes would be handled by the troupe members later.

The adventurers that helped received the "Proof of Completion" and left.

Viare was ecstatic since she also received a "Proof of Completion".

「Let's go back Kousuke-san」(Viare)

「I have something to talk about with Randolph-san so I won't leave yet.」
(Kousuke)

「Well then, I'll be heading back first alright?」(Viare)

「Mhmm, see you tomorrow?」(Kousuke)

「Yes」(Viare)

Viare bowed and headed back to town... Skipping happily. Receiving a "Proof of Completion" for her hard work, she was obviously elated.

After seeing Viare off until she disappeared past the town's entrance, Kousuke headed toward Randolph.

「Oh, Watase-san? You haven't left yet?」(Randolph)

「I have a small proposal about an interesting play」(Kousuke)

「A proposal is it」(Randolph)

「I have an idea about a flashy play. Would you like to hear more?」(Kousuke)

「.. Hmm」(Randolph)

Randolph was slightly taken aback, thinking there was something hidden in his words.

「..... If you want us to pay for the idea, just to remind you, we don't have much money」(Randolph)

「Pay for the idea? ... I didn't even think of that」(Kousuke)

「Hearing that, it seems you weren't thinking about getting money out of this」(Randolph)

「That's right, I was just too excited thinking that I may possibly be able to see this idea with my own eyes. I didn't even think about money, that's how excited I was」(Kousuke)

Seeing how lightly Kousuke was speaking, Randolph felt that he had no ulterior motives.

「.... Please, come with me. Let's discuss the details in my tent」(Randolph-san)

The two sat inside an area in the tent that was seemingly marked off as a paperwork zone.

「The proposal Watase-san wishes to share, can you indulge me the details?」(Randolph)

「Where I'm from it's called a “Hero Show” you see. It's not about an actual existence from the past, but rather, a fictional hero's story. His name is “Ride Hero”」(Kousuke)

「... I've never heard of such a being before」(Randolph)

「I figured」(Kousuke)

『If he knew I'd fall off the chair』Kousuke thought.

「The story is well-suited for children. The main story is about a hero fighting against an evil organization hell bent on world conquest. The story is written so that there's no need to deeply read into it. That way, all the children would be able to understand. Each part of the story is about 25 minutes long so they won't get bored and restless either. The climax of each part is when the protagonist transforms and when he uses his signature move」(Kousuke)

「Transform? Like the “Lycanthropy” gift some people have?」(Randolph)

Being unfamiliar with the term, the only thing Randolph could compare it to was the gift “Lycanthropy”. In this world, there were no heroes that would wear an “Enhancement suit” and combat evil.

「No, the protagonist was kidnapped by a mysterious person from an evil organization and modified into a monster-like being. Before he was brainwashed, he escaped and decided to use his newly gained power for good」(Kousuke)

When “Ride Hero” was televised, it had two story arcs. Kousuke was explaining to Randolph the first arc. To give Randolph a better understanding of “Ride Hero” Kousuke explained everything about him in a way relevant to this

world's common sense.

The first generation of "Ride Hero's" setting was thoroughly explained so Kousuke began explaining the first story arc. Of course, while trying to omit things that only exist on Earth. The exception was the bike. He thought to replace it with a horse but despite knowing Randolph wouldn't understand he left that in.

When Kousuke finished explaining the premise Randolph questioned about the requirements of the production and the direction and organization of the story. Fight scenes, explosion scenes, narrator moderated scenes, Kousuke answered to the best of what his memory could recall. Kousuke's a beginner when it comes to theatrical plays so when Randolph questioned him about the production and direction of the play he had no clear answers. Randolph, being a professional, wanted to hear what Kousuke wished to see with these questions.

「It sounds interesting, but there are a few problems with this. You called it "transformation" correct? I still can't figure out the appearance of the protagonist after transforming and what exactly is a "baiku"? There's also the issue of expense. Since the story is aimed for the children then there's the possibility the adults would not be interested, dropping our potential audience count.」(Randolph)

「I'll leave some information about the transformation and bike for you to look over later. As for gathering clients, I have another idea for that. Did you know that having someone attractive appointed for the main and supporting roles draws in customers?」(Kousuke)

「Having a beautiful hostess is commonly used to attract customers, so yes I do know」(Randolph)

Randolph thought for a moment and came to a conclusion.

「... Let's give this a try. Since it's only about 25 minutes it'll be easy to rehearse and set up. For now, could you list the necessary props and essentials we would need for this play?」(Randolph)

『They'll definitely need someone to play "Ride Hero", the monsters, and the evil organization's henchmen』Kousuke thought.

「I wonder if I should draw out those things for him. I hope it comes out well」(Kousuke)

He didn't have to worry about it. Kousuke would rapidly get better with a little practice drawing. It's not like he needed to draw a masterpiece anyways.

He just simply needed to draw the images he has in his head.

Although, Kousuke actually had an easier method of explanation instead of drawing. He didn't realize this until after he became good at drawing.

He felt a little depressed since he wasted paper, which are expensive in this world. It wasn't a complete loss though since, at the very least, he became very proficient at drawing.

Incidentally, the paper of this world isn't made of reeds or other vegetation. It's produced by the dehydration of a mixture of ocean water and a unique fluid.

「Would it be fine to continue the rest of this tomorrow?」(Randolph)

「When do you want me to drop by tomorrow?」(Kousuke)

「I'll be busy from the morning to afternoon so the evening if you could. By evening I should be in this tent」(Randolph)

「Alright, I'll try to drop by tomorrow evening then. I'll stop for today」(Kousuke)

「Yes, thank you for everything today」(Randolph)

He led Kousuke out of the tent and returned inside to begin writing down the details of their discussion. He did so for the troupe, but more so because it was a story he's never heard about despite being well-travelled. The troupe's income was heavily reliant on stories they learn of during their travel.

The following day, Kousuke and Viare completed two requests before Kousuke separated to meet with Randolph. He asked a familiar face among the troupe about Randolph's location and, once again, ended up in front of the same tent.

「Randolph-san, I'll be intruding」(Kousuke)

Kousuke spoke from the tent's entrance and received consent before entering.

After the two greeted each other they continued from where they left off last night.

「How's the progress on the costume designs? The details of the costumes might be difficult, but the basics of it should be done already right?」(Randolph)

「Yes, those are ready」(Kousuke)

Kousuke brought out the designs and placed them out on the table.

「Hou... this is quite..」(Randolph)

Randolph leaked an astonished voice seeing the drawings.

In addition to it being splendidly drawn, it provided a detailed drawing of the head, the entire front and back of the body and its lateral views. "Ride Hero's" design wasn't the only thing drawn, "Fake Hero's" design was also there. The mysterious person, Man-Spider and Leopard-Man, four extra character designs were drawn. Even the bike was drawn.

Randolph was shocked at the progress rate in just two days.

「This is wonderful! I truly did not expect to be presented something of this caliber!」(Randolph)

「Hearing that, it makes me glad that I placed a great deal of effort」(Kousuke)

Kousuke happily laughed.

「This isn't the only thing I wanted to show you though」(Kousuke)

He teasingly laughed and stood up.

「TRANS—FOORM!」(Kousuke)



Kousuke took up “Ride Hero’s” transformation pose and, after one second, actually transformed into “Ride Hero”.

Randolph’s eyes widened in complete shock at the scene.

「Does it match the design?」(Kousuke)

He spun on the spot to show every angle of the costume.

Randolph excitedly examined every bit of Kousuke and his costume.

Seeing no flaws, he shook his head in silence. Being able to see the colors for the costume that the drawings lacked, he had no complaints.

「That’s a relief. I couldn’t look at the entire thing on me by myself」

「But.. How do you do this? Do you really have a transformation belt? Or did you actually make one!？」(Randolph)

「I used magic. I'm just wearing an illusory costume」(Kousuke)

This was the easy to understand method Kousuke had.

When he was placing the final touches to the drawings, he felt that it would be alright as long as the gist of his idea was conveyed. But that was just an assumption, not reality. While he was pondering how he could display even more details, he remembered that he could use illusion magic.

Since it was technically just a change in appearance, whether a maid or "Ride Hero", there wasn't much difference.

Without delay, he used the magic and in one shot was able to reproduce the costume. He had the image clearly in his head since he was recently sketching the idea so there was no chance of it failing.

「Magic! I see, with magic! I honestly thought you truly became "Ride Hero" since you took up the transformation pose」(Randolph)

Randolph was unable to notice Kousuke simultaneously using magic while posing earlier, which resulted in his earlier misunderstanding.

「If the actors learn how to use this type of magic I believe the need for costumes would be removed. Do you think they'll be able to learn it?」(Kousuke)

At this moment, Kousuke doesn't understand that the nature of his suggestion is fundamentally impossible.

His magic produces a “real” illusion where it tricks all the senses of others. Ordinary people simply cannot use it due to its high requirements. The magic they would be able to use would be illusions with no tangibility.

「I'm not certain. Just in case, I prefer having the costumes prepared. So, could you head over to the props department so they could have a good look at your costume? Also, please teach your magic to the head magician of my troupe」(Randolph)

Kousuke nodded and dispelled the illusory costume.

The two discussed further about “Ride Hero’s” signature jump kick move, “Ride Kick”. They agreed to use magic that emits a flash and produces an explosive sound the moment the kick lands. A combination of the two would be

similar to a stun grenade, but such a magic doesn't exist. Luckily, it's reproducible if it's done separately. The villains exploding from the kick, this effect could be achieved with magic smoke and sound as well it seemed. The abilities of the villains would be managed with magic as well.

Randolph was grinning like a child with a new toy. This play, it might become his ideal play! Unable to contain himself, he was pondering where he should start.

That day, the only thing Kousuke did was assist the prop department with the costume design.. By being stared at with the illusory costume on.

The troupe had other plays to rehearse and perform so they couldn't only focus on the "Hero Show". Nevertheless, Randolph would use his spare time to make preparations for it.

Even Kousuke would drop by to give some advice in between his requests. The "Hero Show" was slowly taking shape.

When the troupe was ready to perform the "Hero Show", it was past the originally planned date. It's already been twenty days since they've arrived at St. Beria. The townspeople were confused why the troupe was still around when the original play was already over.

「Before this is announced, shall we do a final rehearsal with a small group of

outsiders watching us? I want to confirm something with them」(Kousuke)

Kousuke, who saw the rehearsal of the “Hero Show”, suggested this to further improve it.

He believed that outsiders would have a different opinion of the show compared to those who already saw it.

In Kousuke’s eyes, he felt it was satisfactory already since he saw it numerous times.

「Your suggestion is to find problematic points that we may have missed, correct? It makes sense, let's give it a try」(Randolph)

「Then I'll bring the children over tomorrow morning」(Kousuke)

Kousuke, who left the troupe’s premise, headed towards the orphanage.

He met and explained the plan to Wei and it was decided that Wei and Viare would come along with the children the next day.

The next day at the troupe, the children who were brought over were restless as they waited impatiently for the show to start.

The “Hero Show’s” story was when “Ride Hero” saves a group of movers from a monster.

When it finally started, the children’s attention was rapt toward the story being unraveled. The children were “oo-ing” at arrival of “Ride Hero” on his bike, delivering his signature “Ride Kick” on the monster. The two youngest were latched onto Viare and Wei, startled by the sudden, loud explosion from the kick.

Randolph, who felt that the rehearsal was a success, had his expectations betrayed by the children’s somewhat unimpressed responses.

Randolph consulted with the children to confirm the reason. The children said that the story’s pacing was too abrupt since they had no idea what was going on.

Randolph and his crew knew beforehand the background story of “Ride Hero” so they were able to follow the story. But the children do not know anything about “Ride Hero” so it left them with a murky impression of the protagonist.

「Let’s try giving some details about what’s happening by adding a few scenes」(Randolph)

At Randolph's suggestion Kousuke gave a nod.

「Right. We ended up cutting a lot out since we already knew about the story, and this was the result」(Kousuke)

「Also, we need to reduce the volume of the explosion a bit. It scared the children more than excited them. We have to properly thank the children for their help. Do you think they'll be happy if we gave them some treats as a reward?」(Randolph)

「It should be enough」(Kousuke)

Thus the troupe took two more days to fix the problems and the “Hero Show” was finally ready.

With the preparations done, the members of the troupes, brimming with confidence, began advertising the show throughout the town.

Even though everyone was told it was intended for children, many adults came too for the fun of it. The adults probably came because the admission fee was extremely cheap.

Beginning with the introduction of the characters, the play began. The

audiences were bewildered at the unusual story, excited at the transformation scene, in awe at the fight scenes, trembling at “Ride Hero’s” predicaments, and raised a commotion when “Ride Kick” was used.

The audience’s applause, after the play was over and the actors lined up for a final bow, was explosive.

With this, Randolph became convinced that the “Hero Show” could be used as one of his main plays.

「We've been under Watase-san's care constantly these days...」(Randolph)

The “Hero Show” was performed for three more days and the Troupe decided to depart to Ricardo.

Randolph had his head lowered to Kousuke, who gave him such a wonderful story.

「I just pushed the idea onto you since I wanted to see it myself, there's really

no need for any thanks」(Kousuke)

「I feel like I cannot thank you enough for all you've done for us though! You didn't just give us one scenario to enact, but multiple ones! How can we ever repay you?」(Randolph)

To not forget, the numerous scenarios were recorded and are currently heavily guarded.

Kousuke felt that the ideas he gave him weren't that big of a deal and being thanked so much by Randolph was making him want to shrink back.

「Raise your head, the rest are calling for you. If you don't then they won't be able to depart for Ricardo」(Kousuke)

Kousuke began lightly pushing Randolph towards his troupe.

Randolph lowered his head once more before heading towards his troupe.

「Let's meet again one day!」(Kousuke)

After saying that, Randolph and the troupe members all waved back and left the town.

The following day after the troupe departed, there were many children playing in the town square, imitating what they saw.

「Transform!」(Child)

Seeing the children take the transformation pose, it reminded Kousuke of his childhood.

Running around and playing with his friends, telling his parents about what he did when he got home, getting to eat a delicious home-cooked meal and falling asleep in between his parents.

The memories left him bathed in a nostalgic feel.

Not even his extraordinary power, thrilling moments he will have in this world, and the day his homesickness fades away would make him forget his life on Earth.

「I want to see my family again...」(Kousuke)

His half hopeful, half resigned muttering was unheard and scattered into the wind.

Chapter 15: It's not fake! An actual ruin

「Good morning Kousuke-san」(Viare)

Since the troupe no longer required his assistance, Kousuke decided to fill the extra time he attained with more requests.

Right before he was about to leave, Viare called out to him.

Surprised by her sudden voice, Kousuke returned a greeting.

「Goo~ morn.. wait, why are you here? And who's the person besides you?」
(Kousuke)

Kousuke tilted his head at Viare and the unknown individual, not understanding why she came to the inn instead of waiting at their usual spot.

「The person besides me is someone like a brother to us. He grew up in our orphanage and is currently independent. On occasion, he returns with gifts while checking on the children」(Viare)

「Mhmm, so why is he here with you? Is it possible that he wants to observe you working?」(Kousuke)

She turned her head with a “Right?” face.

「Well.. You do worry me a bit though」(???)

The man denied Viare's words.

「First things first, it's a pleasure to meet you. I'm called Konsato. It seems Viare and the children are being taken care of by you」(Konsato)

「It's no big deal」(Kousuke)

「Nono, I heard from the old man. You went into a dangerous territory to save the children」(Konsato)

「Ah.. Well anyone else would have done the same」(Kousuke)

Hence, the two continued to exchange compliments and modesty.

「We're going off track here so let's end it there」(Viare)

「Hmm, that's true. Let's cut straight to the point then. I came here today to ask you to accept a request」(Konsato)

「Request? You're not applying it through the guild?」(Kousuke)

「I've already applied it through the guild, but I wanted to guarantee at least one trustworthy individual. When I consulted with the old man about this, both him and Viare recommended you」(Konsato)

「You told me yesterday that you don't have to assist the troupe anymore right? So I was hoping you could help Kon-niisan with his request」(Viare)

Viare clapped her hands together and stared at Kousuke.

「It's true I already told them everything and have more free time, but... I can't help with anything that'll take a while alright? I can't leave them on their own for too long」(Kousuke)

「The timeframe is at most twelve days. The roundtrip is around seven days and the work is around three days. The request type is an escort mission. The destination is a ruin. My profession is a scholar and I plan on visiting the ruin to study it」(Konsato)

When Kousuke heard the word “ruin”, he assumed it was probably the guild giving him a training request again.

His assumption though was completely off the mark. The guild doesn't have that kind of free time to prioritize on Kousuke's development.

「Is it possibly that you want to explore a recently discovered passage in a ruin?」(Kousuke)

「If we find one then that may be the case, but fundamentally speaking you'll only be an escort. If it seems that doing so will delay the twelve day plan then I will not request that of you. This ruin is what adventurers would consider a "dried ruin" so I doubt we'll find something like that though」(Konsato)

「If that's the case then I accept」(Kousuke)

「Thank you」(Konsato)

Konsato smiled with a relieved expression. Viare did the same.

「When do we leave?」(Kousuke)

「This afternoon」(Konsato)

「So soon!?」(Kousuke)

「Sorry for the abruptness」(Konsato)

「Is there a reason for this?」(Kousuke)

「My scholarly spirit is demanding I rush over as soon as possible to study it!」
(Konsato)

「.... I see...」(Kousuke)

Kousuke felt slightly exhausted hearing how overwhelming Konsato's thirst for knowledge was.

「Where should I head to once I finish preparing for the journey?」(Kousuke)

「There should be a few carriages lined up near the main gate, you can't miss it」(Konsato)

「Then I'll meet you there later」(Kousuke)

「Yes. Thank you very much for accepting my request」(Konsato)

Saying that, Konsato lowered his head before leaving the inn.

「Viare, why are you still here?」(Kousuke)

「I want to help with the preparations」(Viare)

「Ah, thank you. Which reminds me, are you coming with us as well?」
(Kousuke)

Viare shook her head. She already heard the details of the request from Konsato before and concluded that it was impossible for her.

「I plan on staying behind. I won't be of much use on an escort mission. He also has someone hired to take care of the chores」(Viare)

「Is that so. So for the next twelve days are you going to just take care of the children at the orphanage?」(Kousuke)

「I plan on working at Kurosani-san's place」(Viare)

Kurosani is a painter who's on friendly terms with Viare.

While doing various tasks by following Kousuke, Viare found a work she's exceptionally good at.

It's related to colors.

When Kurosani was depressed due to a slump was when Viare and Kousuke delivered some paint to her. Kurosani asked the two of them about their impression of her current work and Viare's answer motivated and reinvigorated her painter's spirit. Ever since then, Kurosani would invite Viare for more consultations, thus allowing Viare to further develop her strong artistic sense.

The work Viare mentioned was probably to increase the variety of colors for Kurosani-san to use.

Finished with the preparations, the two left the inn. The preparation was light since all they did was re-organize his current luggage slightly. The two were leisurely chatting while prepping earlier since they had plenty of time.

The two didn't immediately head to the gathering spot. Instead, they purchased some travel rations and had an early lunch before heading to the troupe. Viare separated right after the lunch.

He explained to the troupe that he will be gone on a request for some time. After, he headed to where Konsato was waiting.

「Hello」(Kousuke)

Seeing Konsato seated on the coachman's seat of the carriage, Kousuke greeted him.

「Oh? You've arrived already?」(Konsato)

「Already? I thought the departure time was this afternoon」(Kousuke)

Konsato slapped his forehead with an apologetic expression and lowered his head.

「The fault lies in my explanation, I'm terribly sorry. The plan was to depart after lunch. So the hired adventurers were told to come after they finished lunch. The rest of my crew aren't finished eating either. It'll be at least an hour before we depart」(Konsato)

「One hour huh... It's a long wait.. And it's not enough time to wander around

the town... Maybe I'll just relax until then. Oh yea! Konsato-san, would you happen to know the kinds of monsters we may encounter? If you do, please let me know」(Kousuke)

「It's roughly the same as the monsters around here. Lutz Monkeys and Killing Dogs, additionally Dive Hoppers and Needle Bushes as well」(Konsato)

「I'm not familiar with the last two, could you tell me more about them?」(Kousuke)

「Of course」(Konsato)

Dive Hoppers are giant grasshopper monsters, roughly the size of a rabbit. They rarely travel alone and are commonly seen in groups of 5-10. Their head is the hardest part of their body and they use it to attack by jumping high and using the force of the fall to crash into their targets.

There was a case where a mercenary company was devastated by a group of around 100 Dive Hoppers in the past. Such a record was left behind.

Needle Bushes are bush shaped monsters that camouflages in with other greeneries. They stay still until a prey comes into range and stabs out cogon grass-like needles to impale their preys.

【TL: Imperata cylindrica, also known as blady grass, cogon grass, kunai grass or Japanese bloodgrass】

The area around this monster tends to have slightly withered grasses so it's not difficult to spot despite it blending in well with the other bushes.

In addition to the monsters' detail, Kousuke was also told about some of the hazardous zones along the way. A brief summary of the hired adventurers were provided as well.

While the two were talking, the people who were having lunch arrived and the preparation for departure began.

「Ah, the other adventurers have arrived. You should go introduce yourself, let's continue this later alright?」(Konsato)

The hour conversation they had caused the two's tone to become more informal toward each other.

「Okay, I'll go do that」(Kousuke)

He gathered his luggage and headed towards the adventurers.

The total amount of adventurers amounted to five, including Kousuke. These five must protect Konsato and his crew of eight.

According to Konsato, the groups are set up as a three's and two singles. The three-man group has two men and one woman. The group of three had a veteran while the younger two looked somewhat inexperienced. The solo applicant looked around 14 and had the appearance of a complete greenhorn.

「Hello. We'll be working together, my name is Watase Kousuke」(Kousuke)

The veteran from the group of three responded to hearing Kousuke's name.

「Are you THE Watase I've heard so much about these days? I heard you were young, but I've always assumed you'd be over 20」(???)

「Despite how I look, I'm almost 18 you know」(Kousuke)

Kousuke took the initiative, assuming he was being looked down upon.

「Oh, I see, you look a bit younger though」(???)

「So I've been told...」(Kousuke)

「You have a baby face so I guess that's why」(???)

Kousuke is not much of a baby face. As a Japanese, his face is within normal measures. This world views his face in a similar way Westerners would view his childish face.

「I'm Tony. I babysit these two, sort of. This boy's Lyle, the gal's Iris」(Tony)

Tony introduced the two while pointing at them.

Iris didn't show much expression and lowered her head while Lyle lowered his

head with a discontent look hearing that he's being "babysat" by Tony.

「Mhmm, and the other one isn't part of my group, but since he looks like a greenhorn I figured I'll help him out a bit while on this request. He's called Horton」(Tony)

The introduced Horton looked nervous and stiffly lowered his head.

「Please take care of me」(Horton)

Kousuke turned towards the four and lowered his head once more.

「Small question, you mind?」(Tony)

「Go ahead」(Kousuke)

「When they were explaining the details of the request you weren't around. Why?」(Tony)

「Explanation? When was this?」(Kousuke)

「Two days ago」(Tony)

「Then I definitely couldn't be there. I was hired this morning. An acquaintance and the scholar there directly requested for my participation this morning」(Kousuke)

「This morning... I'm surprised you accepted. Wasn't it too sudden?」(Tony)

Hearing this outrageous situation, not only Tony but the other three were shocked as well.

「The scholar is something like a brother to my acquaintance so it was difficult to refuse. And I wasn't taking any request at that time either」(Kousuke)

「I see. The client must have wanted a few more adventurers. As for me, I always welcome more helping hands」(Tony)

「I've never done an escort job before so I have no idea what to do」(Kousuke)

「Really? I heard you've been banging out requests left and right though」
(Tony)

Despite hearing such rumors, truths and lies were mixed in, making it difficult to tell what's actually true.

「They were mostly odd job requests. Almost all of it could be done without leaving town. Since I'm new to this I'll move according to your orders. I have a ridiculous amount of strength and endurance so please don't hold back since Tony-san seems to have some experience with escort jobs. It would go a lot smoother with someone experienced in charge right?」(Kousuke)

「That would help a lot. I won't ask for anything impossible, but as you are it would have definitely been problematic if you moved on your own. Lyle, you too, you better follow orders when there's an emergency」(Tony)

「I know that already!」(Lyle)

He answered while turning his head away angrily.

Kousuke wondered if they have a bad relationship with each other and asked,

but Tony shook his head.

According to Tony, this request was something Lyle and Iris were supposed to take together. But the others were worried and made Tony come along as a precaution.

Lyle truly disliked that. He felt like he was being cheated since he was convinced that he was a full-fledged adventurer already.

Iris had mixed feelings about this. Relieved that Tony came, but also upset at not being completely trusted.

「I believe having someone reliable nearby is a wonderful thing though」
(Kousuke)

Lyle heard Kousuke's thoughts from the side and glared at him.

「Well, that person may have knowledge that you don't have that's helpful right? Don't forget techniques and skills too that might be lifesaving」(Kousuke)

「Th..That's true, but....」(Lyle)

「You have someone useful besides you, just think of it as being lucky」
(Kousuke)

Tony gave a bitter smile hearing Kousuke's opinion of him.

「I've done escort jobs before so just the two of us is enough!」(Lyle)

Lyle yelled and walked away. Iris lowered her head towards Kousuke to apologize and ran to Lyle to calm him down.

Since Lyle wasn't unmotivated about this request, everyone decided to drop this subject for the mean time. He didn't want to be a burden on the team, he's a pro too after all.

When the preparation to depart concluded, one of the scholars called out to everyone.

「The formation will be myself and Horton as the vanguards and the carriages

in the center. Lyle and Iris will get the sides. Watase-san, please guard the rear. Any objections?」(Tony)

Tony explained the formation to the group. No one had any objections.

「If you see anything unusual, call out to me. When you do, keep your voice down though. I'll pass the message to Horton too, just make sure you let me know whatever it might be. The only exception would be if a monster is headed our way, just yell then」(Tony)

The four nodded and headed to their respective positions.

And thus, the group departed.

The journey was relatively smooth. The random monster encounters were expected so it didn't delay the plan.

The monsters that did appear were all the ones that were previously mentioned.

Since Tony and Kousuke knew that Dive Hoppers may appear, they were vigilant toward the sky. When they did appear, the group was able to avoid a surprise attack.

The battles they had on their way to the ruin gave each other a good idea of the each other's capabilities.

Except for Kousuke who's never using his full power. Despite that though, Lyle would glance at Kousuke enviously since he was nowhere as strong as Kousuke.

The only ones that had no trouble during the fights were Kousuke and Tony. Those two were never troubled by the fights and would kill each monster with one swing.

Lyle and Iris were fine as long as they held control over the fight.

Lyle was a close-quarter swordsman while Iris was a mid to long range archer. The two grouped together often so they understood each other's fighting style and would smoothly follow through.

For Horton's case, it could be said that he did his best despite it being his first time. He stumbled around here and there, but everyone expected that. He was improving slowly with Tony giving him advices.

Horton used a sword while Tony used a spear, a long knife and a few magic spells.

Tony's mana capacity was on the lower end so all of his spells had a relatively mild firepower. The spells he would use would usually restrain or break the opponent's balance.

「Seems we'll reach the ruin by tomorrow」(Tony)

「Seems so. I'm just glad there weren't any real issues so far」(Kousuke)

「I agree」(Tony)

Kousuke and Tony were chatting while standing guard for the evening. Since everyone else was asleep they were whispering.

Originally, Horton was supposed to stand guard as well, but doing an escort job he was unfamiliar with left him physically and mentally drained. At the urgings of Kousuke and Tony, he hasn't done any night watches since yesterday.

「The fact that you're strong is one of the reasons for the safe travel. It allowed me to watch over Horton more, thanks. You're already that strong at such a young age, I'm sure it's possible you'll become world famous in no time」(Tony)

「Not really interested in that though」(Kousuke)

「If you're a man you should at least do one big thing, don't you want to become famous?」(Tony)

「I've thought of that before, but...」(Kousuke)

When he was back on Earth he has thought of doing something big and becoming famous. That was mostly a delusion with no clear vision though.

But here, he coincidentally attained something amazing and has the ability to become extremely famous.

Thinking of that actually happening, it made him incredibly nervous. It wouldn't be fame through his efforts so he would feel guilty. It's to the point that he has no pride in his current strength. For as long as he stays stuck with this mindset, he will most likely continue living on a peaceful lifestyle.

Kousuke has no complaints about living peacefully either.

「For now, I'll just go with the flow」(Kousuke)

「Quite the peaceful one huh. I don't see anything wrong with being a bit

more ambitious. Like Lyle」(Tony)

「About that, it's just a difference in preference. Let's leave it at that」
(Kousuke)

「I guess I'll just go with that then」(Tony)

「Since we have some time, mind teaching me some magic? Like that blast of wind, looked very useful」(Kousuke)

During one of their fights, Tony used a strong blast of wind to change the trajectory of a Dive Hopper's attack. With just that, the Dive Hopper's attack became useless.

A magic that could disable an opponent without harming them, it was ideal and Kousuke wanted to learn it.

「Sure. I also want to learn some of the magic spells that you know. What can you use so far?」(Tony)

「Flight magic, teleportation magic, a penetrating beam magic, barrier magic, and healing magic. The others I know are mostly for day-to-day conveniences」
(Kousuke)

「Is your magical aptitude very high?」(Tony)

Tony had an astonished face hearing the list of magic Kousuke could use.

Not just ordinary people, but fledgling and third rate adventurers would not be able to use some of the magic Kousuke could use, being astonished was a given.

「My magical aptitude is definitely not ordinary」(Kousuke)

「You could already do so much.. I still think you should aim to become famous. Just why are you doing odd-job requests only?」(Tony)

「I get asked that question a lot. I always answer that with “Safety is number one”. I don't have to do anything dangerous to survive anyways」(Kousuke)

It's something Kousuke noticed a bit too. He would unconsciously try to avoid any situation that would possibly threaten his life. He doesn't understand why he's like that, but he has no intention of stifling it. He felt that it's for the best.

「Then why become an adventurer? Wouldn't taking up a craft and working be a better idea?」(Tony)

「St. Beria isn't my permanent resident」(Kousuke)

「I see, it wouldn't make sense to do that if you're constantly traveling. Still, becoming a traveling merchant or something similar would have worked though」(Tony)

「Well, the odd-job requests was the easiest thing to do for me. Even if you tell me I could become a merchant I wouldn't be able to make heads or tails out of that profession」(Kousuke)

「With your abilities, making a living while travelling should be no problem, just hunt some stuff and sell the meat. There are some birds and deer that might be rejected in trades, but rare species like the bird "Yewel" could be sold at a high price. When I had no money I did that. There are some requests to hunt for them too. I'm sure the butchers would be happy if they can refill their stocks from time to time」(Tony)

The butchers Kousuke knew never gave him similar personal requests because they didn't know that he could do it. If they knew he was this strong and dexterous they wouldn't have hesitated to ask.

「I see, so there were requests like that around. I've been too focused on doing requests that I could do without leaving town so I never noticed.」
(Kousuke)

The night watch ended as the two discussed other similar jobs and requests that could be done.

The two never realized that Lyle was listening to a portion of their conversation.

The next day, the group arrived at the ruin in the afternoon. Weeds blanketed the entire area and the buildings looked decayed. The place was very quiet, no traces of human beings could be found.

This place was abandoned a hundred years ago. It was abandoned because the drinking water became contaminated and caused a widespread disease. It was deemed hospitable again during an investigation ten years ago, but it remained abandoned since no one wanted to live in a ruin. The country's knights would patrol nearby on occasion so the possibility of this place becoming a bandit's nest was zero. If anyone could be found staying inside, it would be travelers using the buildings as temporary shelters for a night.

Similar to the travelers, Kousuke's group chose a random building to become their base.

While the others were setting up the base, Kousuke and Konsato were talking with each other.

「The investigation begins tomorrow?」(Kousuke)

「I plan on taking a quick look soon, but we'll begin the full investigation tomorrow」(Konsato)

「Will an escort be necessary inside the ruin?」(Kousuke)

「Yes. We probably won't see any people, but there's a possibility that monsters have snuck inside so I'll have you come with me tomorrow」(Konsato)

「I heard on our way here that this place was abandoned a hundred years ago, but as a ruin it's quite young isn't it? Will the investigation of this place prove useful?」(Kousuke)

「It may have been only a hundred years since it was abandoned, but this town's history is only about three hundred years old. so it's a bit hasty to call it a young ruin」(Konsato)

「Ah.. is that so. I completely forgot about this town's history」(Kousuke)

The group finished with setting up the base and dropped off their luggage. Before unpacking, they headed toward an abandoned temple. There's a chance a monster may appear so Kousuke, Lyle, and Iris accompanied the scholars. The other two stood guard near the base.

This temple wasn't maintained at all. It looked musty and rundown everywhere. It was smaller than the "practice" temple Kousuke explored with Borudosu.

「If it's this small then the investigation should be fast right?」(Iris)

To Iris's word, Konsato rebuked.

「This place's underground area is much larger than this. Because of that fact, the investigation may not necessarily finish quickly. I'll lead you to the entrance down」(Konsato)

With the adventurers surrounding them, the scholars headed to the stairs.

After confirming the area, they continued to explore the temple. The scholars were pointing at various locations while chatting. The adventurers ignored

them and stayed vigilant of the surrounding.

After making a round, the group returned back to the base.

The next day is when the actual investigation began.

Although, Kousuke and Horton were on guard duty near the base so he actually didn't go into the lower levels.

「What was it like down there?」(Kousuke)

Before heading down himself, Kousuke asked Tony who went in yesterday.

「This might be obvious but it's dark, visibility is low, and the direction of the air is difficult to discern. Something like that. Also, there were a few monsters in there. I could feel their presence, but they never appeared. They're probably just cowardly monsters.」(Tony)

「So nothing should happen as long as I stay alert?」(Horton)

「That's about right. We were like that yesterday and nothing happened.」

Kousuke and I will be coming too so no need to get so nervous.」(Tony)

Tony stated while patting Horton's shoulder.

「Wa.. Wahii!」(Horton)

Kousuke and Tony laughed lightly seeing how stiff Horton was.

As they descended, Kousuke, with permission, casted『Light』to brighten up the immediate area. Ten meter radius brightened up, as if bathed in sunlight. Seeing how much light was being given off, Tony asked if Kousuke will be alright with using so much mana.

「Will you be fine using so much mana?」(Tony)

「I'll be fine. I haven't even used 10% of my mana.」(Kousuke)

「You make me envious. If I tried the same I'll end up using at least 30%.」(Tony)

「This magic is supposed to be mana efficient right?」(Kousuke)

「I'm terrible with mana control so I end up using more than necessary」(Tony)

「I see. It's like the saying "Even dust, if piled, can become a mountain"」
(Kousuke) 【TL: Japanese proverb – Chiri mo tsumoreba yama to naru. "Small things add up" would be the English equivalent】

「Those two are about to move forward」(Horton)

While Kousuke and Tony were talking, Horton spoke up.

「Ah, sorry」(Kousuke)

「Thank you for letting us know」(Tony)

「It's nothing」(Horton)

Tony and Horton took the vanguard and Kousuke was the rearguard. Today,

the group once again began their investigation.

Their destination was a large room. It looked like it was used as a wareroom in the past. The room was littered with broken goods everywhere.

The broken goods looked like trash to Kousuke, Tony and Horton, but the scholars saw differently. To them, every piece was of great historical importance. The scholars immediately began their work and started to examine each goods, piece by piece.

「I'll stand guard here, think the two of you could patrol the perimeter? There might be some monsters hidden in some places」(Tony)

「Understood」(Kousuke)

「Ro.. Roger that!」(Horton)

The still nervous Horton and Kousuke left the large room together and entered the hallway.

They began inspecting the other rooms. Since they had little understanding about the value of the remains, they were cautious not to wantonly touch anything.

In the fifth room they inspected, Kousuke spotted a pitfall trap and showed Horton its location. The two avoided the area around the pitfall.

But Horton tripped on a heavy table and fell into the pitfall. He screamed loudly as he fell.

「Are you alright!?」(Kousuke)

「I think I broke my arm」(Horton)

He sounded as if he was enduring a lot of pain. Despite that, he responded strongly.

Kousuke jumped down the hole as well.

Horton, who was covered in cold sweat, was leaning against the wall while grabbing the upper portion of his injured arm.

「I'm going to check the arm now okay?」(Kousuke)

「Yes」(Horton)

Horton gritted his teeth as he bore the pain.

The arm was swollen and burning up.

Kousuke immediately understood its condition.

「It's definitely broken. No worries though, it can be fixed immediately」
(Kousuke)

「Is that the truth!?」(Horton)

Seeing Kousuke immediately nodding, Horton's distorted expression loosened a bit.

Kousuke began treating Horton's arm using the knowledge Horun imparted to him.

To prevent the bones from healing improperly, it had to be straightened. Only issue was an immense pain would follow. Horton bit down on a thick cloth and gritted his teeth once more.

「I'm starting」(Kousuke)

Horton shut his eyes tightly and nodded.

The moment Kousuke pulled the arm, Horton gave out a loud, muffled scream.

Hearing that, Kousuke grimaced. Using his spare hand he palpated the broken arm to confirm that the bones were set straight and then used magic to begin healing it.

After the treatment finished he exhaled loudly.

「It's over now」(Kousuke)

「Tha..nk..yo..u..」(Horton)

「You'll feel some pain for a bit longer. Just in case, please don't move that arm for today. It won't break again, but the pain might become worse」
(Kousuke)

He shouldered the nodding Horton's good arm and casted flight magic to leave the pit together.

Since the two finished with their patrol they headed back to Tony. After explaining about the Horton's injury, they took him back to the base to rest up.

The rest of the day was without incident and the investigation proceeded on time.

The following day was similarly eventless, except for Lyle being restless. Kousuke and Tony were a bit confused at Lyle's behavior but they didn't dig deeper. Regardless, the reason was unraveled the next morning. When the group finished breakfast, no one knew where Lyle and Horton were.

「Something's wrong」(Kousuke)

「Where could those two have gone? We're preparing to leave soon too... And they didn't eat breakfast either」(Kousuke)

「Iris, have you seen either of them?」(Tony)

Not expecting her to know, Tony asked anyways.

「Er.. that.. umm」(Iris)

She responded oddly, obviously knowing the answer.

If those two were just wandering around then she wouldn't be acting like this.

Getting a bad feeling, Tony questioned further.

It seemed Iris was told to keep quiet about it, but she obediently answered.

「The truth is.. The two went into the hidden room-like place inside the temple last night....」(Iris)

「Huh? I never heard anything about a hidden room」(Tony)

The person who found it was Horton. He found signs of it when he fell down

the pitfall trap.

When he leaned heavily onto the wall it produced an echo that indicated he was most likely leaning on a hollow wall.

Kousuke, at the time, never touched the wall so he never knew.

「I'm terribly sorry! Lyle told me to stay quiet about this! He told me he would come back after he quickly takes a look!」(Iris)

「He volunteered for the night watch last night for this I see」(Tony)

Tony was exasperated and sighed heavily.

「That IDIOT, doing things on his own!」(Tony)

The three explained the situation to the scholars.

They apologized for Lyle's rambunctious behavior and requested permission to search for him.

「There's no helping it. Please, don't mind us and search for him.」(Konsato)

「Thank you very much! I'll make those two apologize as well when I drag them back! Scold them and reduce their reward as you see fit!」(Tony)

Tony lowered his head numerous times, showing his gratitude for the permission.

「Kousuke, would you accompany me?」(Tony)

「Sure.」(Kousuke)

「What about me?」(Iris)

「Iris, you guard the base. Leaving the scholars alone would be an issue. Plus, it's difficult to use a bow in those cramped halls. It's been safe around the base these days, but don't drop your guard alright?」(Tony)

「I understand」(Iris)

With a motivated expression Iris nodded.

「Alright, let's head down」(Tony)

「Please bring those two back」(Iris)

After seeing the two disappear into the temple, Iris climbed up onto a roof near the base to begin her watch.

With Kousuke leading, the two arrived at the pitfall containing the hidden room.

「It's here. Looks like a tunnel was opened. There's no mistake, the two went in here」(Kousuke)

「Let's go」(Tony)

The two jumped into the pitfall and entered the tunnel.

The two whispered to each other as they traveled through the tunnel.

「That hole earlier, it's definitely not a pitfall trap」(Tony)

「Really?」(Kousuke)

「Mhmm, there weren't other traps around right? Just one trap like that seems peculiar. It was probably there just to cover up the hole. It most likely got old with time and ended up becoming a pitfall. This tunnel was probably left undiscovered because who would intentionally fall into such an obvious trap right?」(Tony)

「I guess that sounds about right. Ah, look, there's an arrow on the floor」(Kousuke)

There was an arrow lying on the floor before them. When they focused more

on their surroundings they noticed that there were quite a few scattered about. There were also spots on the floor that looked sunken as well. These clues pointed out that a trap was triggered here.

The two picked up an arrow.

「There's blood on this. Seems like those two were injured」(Kousuke)

「....It's dried and the efficacy of it dropped drastically, but there's poison on the tip as well」(Tony)

Tony scrapped off a dried, powdery substance from the arrowhead and examined it.

「Lyle can handle small injuries, but if it's poison.. He has nothing against them. We should hurry and regroup with them」(Tony)

Kousuke nodded and the two hurried forward.

Suddenly, the two's feet stopped. There was a fork in the tunnel up ahead.

They examined the floor, trying to find footprints to determine the correct direction.

「The right path seems to have more footprints」(Kousuke)

「Seems like it, most likely it's a dead end so they had to turn back, creating more footprints」(Tony)

「So, left it is then」(Kousuke)

As the two travelled down the left path, they spotted a corpse of a monster.

It looked like a gigantic earthworm, Tony told Kousuke it's a relatively weak monster.

Normally, earthworms are great for the field, but these monsters would devour the field and attack people. Its existence was pure harm. As long as the two are careful of an underground attack they won't have any trouble.

「If these things are here.. It must mean that there's a hole in the temple's wall」(Tony)

The building's walls and floors were made with stone and these monsters lack the strength to tear through them.

「Do you think the rest of the monsters that are lurking in here are similar?」(Kousuke)

「They probably entered in a similar way. There might even be abandoned man-made monsters in here, if so, they are definitely starving for mana」(Tony)

「Well.. There's no one around to keep them fed」(Kousuke)

The two proceeded deeper while disarming traps that Lyle and Horton avoided and defeating monsters that they couldn't defeat. This way, when they escape together no hindrance would appear.

In addition, the two saw signs of break-ins here and there and noticed various ornaments and decorations, that could be seen as valuable, were broken recently. It truly showed how inexperienced Lyle and Horton were.

When Tony saw all of this he couldn't consider Lyle as a full-fledged adventurer just yet.

「That thing before surprised me」(Kousuke)

「Ending it with just “being surprised” is more astounding though...」(Tony)

Kousuke commented while laughing, but Tony could only smile dryly.

Just a while ago, the two fought against a “Hard-shelled worm”. It rolled its body up and charged at the two like a steel ball. The attack that resembled a pillbug was something Kousuke expected, but it charged at an incredible speed and he was unable to avoid it in time and got smashed into a wall.

Tony became worried Kousuke got a heavy injury since he didn't wear any heavy armor, but seeing him get up without any problems at all made him feel that his worries were unfounded.

「Huh?」(Kousuke)

「What's wrong? Did you get injured somewhere?」(Tony)

Hearing Kousuke's doubtful voice, Tony inquired.

「I heard a sound」(Kousuke)

「Really? I can't hear anything」(Tony)

「Mm.... I can definitely hear it」(Kousuke)

When he listened carefully, he knew he definitely did not mishear anything.

Kousuke heard the sound of something very heavy moving.

「Which direction?」(Tony)

「Follow me」(Kousuke)

The two ran with Kousuke leading. They ignored the monsters and traps along the way. Five minutes later, Tony started to hear the heavy sounds as well.

「Something is making that sound on a fixed interval. It's most likely extremely heavy.」(Tony)

「It might be a large monster chasing after Lyle and Horton.」(Kousuke)

「That's a possibility. Let's hurry.」(Tony)

Kousuke nodded and the two hurried their pace.

Three minutes later, they entered into the upper levels of a spacious room. The drop down was about eight meters.

Down below, Lyle and Horton could be seen being chased by a four meter tall sculpture. That sculpture didn't look like a brute, instead it reminded Kousuke of a king, with both intelligence and grace flowing from it.

「They seem sluggish, the poison probably circulated throughout their body

already」(Tony)

「Enough talk, we have to save them!」(Kousuke)

「Just wait a moment. I want to avoid dropping in there without a plan and ending up in the same situation」(Tony)

Tony stopped Kousuke from jumping down.

「We just need to beat that thing right?」(Kousuke)

「..... You make it sound easy, but that's unlikely. At least I don't have the confidence to beat that thing」(Tony)

「I feel like I could do it though」(Kousuke)

「You sure?」(Tony)

「I know that I don't feel like I could lose」(Kousuke)

Hearing how indifferently Kousuke responded, Tony couldn't tell if he was just reckless or heroic. The sudden scream from Lyle and Horton pushed Tony to make a decision.

「... Alright! I'll rely on you to distract that thing. No need to push yourself to beat it. I'll drop a rope down from here and bring those two over. Once I got them to safety, I'll yell, until then please endure!」(Tony)

「I can use flight magic so I could save them by myself you know?」(Kousuke)

「....That's right.. You told me you could use it. Alright, I'll leave it to you then」(Tony)

「Roger that!」(Kousuke)

Kousuke, using his magic, tried to fly over to where Lyle and Horton are.

But suddenly, he fell to the floor. The magic stopped working abruptly.

「Eh?」(Kousuke)

「Wha?」(Tony)

Kousuke couldn't understand what was going on and Tony's face twisted thinking "I thought he could use flight magic!".

Hearing a loud thud from Kousuke's fall, Tony immediately dashed to the edge to look down.

「ARE YOU ALRIGHT!?」(Tony)

「I'm fine, scared me though!」(Kousuke)

Seeing Kousuke dust off his clothes and wave back energetically, Tony patted his chest in relief.

「Let's go with your previous plan alright!」(Kousuke)

Without waiting for Tony's response, Kousuke dashed toward the sculpture.

In response, Tony stabbed the iron stake into the ground, tied a rope to it and lowered it down. He began climbing down while placing iron stakes along the wall to provide a foothold.

Satisfied with the preparations, Tony glanced at the slow moving sculpture chasing Kousuke before dashing to Lyle and Horton.

「Good, he's getting the two. It'll probably take a bit longer though」(Kousuke)

While avoiding the incoming punches and kicks, Kousuke glanced slightly toward Tony.

Kousuke had a lot of room to be complacent. The sculpture didn't use any unusual attacks and would only wildly punch and kick. The speed of its attacks weren't exceptionally fast. It couldn't be called slow, but by observing its movements carefully, it's not a difficult thing to do.

「I could just keep dodging its attack, but I really want to see just how far I could go against this statue」(Kousuke)

Unlike his encounter with the Violent Barbs that required him to protect someone constantly, Kousuke didn't want to give up this opportunity where he could fight at his own pace so he stood his ground and took up a fighting stance.

「First, let's compare our strength! COME AT ME!」(Kousuke)

He raised the arm not holding his sword and received the giant sculpture's punch.

The weight of the punch caused him to slide across the ground a bit, but when he stood his ground he came to a complete stop. Kousuke was only pushed back slightly, no injuries could be found.

「Not much I can do about the size difference but I didn't have to use my full power to stop it. Seems like my strength won't lose out against this statue」(Kousuke)

Kousuke stopped pushing back with his arm. The sculpture once again raised its arm to strike. Kousuke dodged the incoming punch and kicked the fist.

The strength of the kick was beyond the sculpture's control and its own fist flew into its chest. The impact of the fist caused cracks to appear on its hand and chest. The sculpture had no sense of pain so it attacked Kousuke once more without pause with the cracked hand. With just dodging, the cracks grew and the fist was quickly becoming useless.

「Next, let's see how well I can move!」(Kousuke)

Kousuke swiftly closed in on the sculpture, jumping from its leg to its arm and finally encroaching onto its shoulder.

Kousuke dodged the swatting hands by a paper thin margin by moving around the head and shoulders.

「Even with unstable footing, my mobility is pretty good」(Kousuke)

He leapt off the shoulder, doing a spin in the air before landing on the ground.

「No issues with my stamina either」(Kousuke)

Just as stated, no signs of shortness of breath could be seen on him.

Kousuke stared at the sculpture with composure as the cracked fist flew toward him.

In response, Kousuke gripped a fist and threw a punch at the giant, cracked fist.

The large fist and the small fist collided and not even a second passed as the sculpture's fist scattered.

Dodging through the flying rubbles, Kousuke charged at the sculpture and with both hands swung his sword.

Aimed at the upper shin, the impact let out an unpleasant sound as sparks scattered about. Regardless, the sword slashed through completely and almost dismembered the leg.

The sculpture attempted to attack once more and the weight placed on the

leg caused it to break off.

Losing its balance the sculpture collapsed to the floor. It attempted to stand but ended up stumbling back to the floor.

「I wonder if I break the head it'll stop moving?」(Kousuke)

Just because the sculpture is shaped after a human, its weakness is probably different, but since Kousuke had no way to find out he struck and decapitated the sculpture.

It seemed whatever was controlling the sculpture was in the head and its loss of it caused the sculpture to stop completely.

In the future, the scholars find out that the sculpture was moving by absorbing the nearby mana through its head. The sculpture was absorbing the mana from Kousuke and the others' use of magic. This was the reason why magic would fail in this room.

Konsato tried to find Kousuke to inform him about this, but by then Kousuke was already long gone. In the end, Kousuke finds out about why his magic failed many months later instead.

「Oh...」(Kousuke)

Kousuke looked at his sword and raised his voice.

The edge of the blade that hit the sculpture was chipped.

「I guess I have to get this repaired again」(Kousuke)

He sheathed his sword while sighing, knowing Clarice's judgment awaited him. He soon headed towards the other three.

He ignored the rope and jumped up using the iron stake footholds on the wall.

「How are the two's condition?」(Kousuke)

「Ah..Uhh.. I treated their wounds. They were poisoned with something that slightly paralyzed and drained their stamina so they'll be fine even if we leave it. How are you doing though? Since.. you were going pretty wild down there」(Tony)

「I.... guess nothing's wrong with me」(Kousuke)

After he confirmed that there are no injuries on himself he answered.

「This is just completely out of the norm... So the rumors of you defeating a Violent Barb was true」(Tony)

Tony's face was contorted, he was simple too shocked.

Unlike Tony, Horton's face was darkening with fear. The sculpture that almost ended his life was easily beaten by Kousuke and that planted a strong fear of Kousuke in Horton.

Lyle's face was obviously expressing jealousy and envy. He wanted to be as strong as him since the two's difference in strength was simply too big.

This envy was something Tony understood too. During his youth, he felt that his potential was endless and whenever he met anyone stronger than him he held jealousy and envy toward them.

Seeing how Lyle was, Tony was recalling his experiences and was bathing in nostalgia.

「Umm, sorry if I'm interrupting something memorable you're recalling, but should we rest first or immediately set out?」(Kousuke)

Despite feeling a bit pained by Horton's gaze, Kousuke asked. It was a shock to him since he's never been feared like this before. Lyle's jealous gaze was easier to deal with.

「That's true, let's rest up first. You and I might be fine, but these two are definitely tired」(Tony)

Kousuke nodded, sat down, and began digging through his bag. Finding what he wanted, he handed the items over to Lyle and Horton.

「It's an antidote I got from an acquaintance. I'm not sure how effective it would be, but drink it just in case」(Kousuke)

It was something Horun gave him. Those antidotes were made by Horun who's highly competent in medicine so there's no possible way that they're ineffective.

Five minutes after the two drank it, they felt the numbing sensation slowly fade away. After twenty minutes, they were able to move normally again.

「Those two are able to move normally again so let's head back up」(Kousuke)

「Sounds good」(Tony)

Hearing Tony say “Yokkorasho” as he stood up, Kousuke threw a low blow comment “You sound like an old man”. 【TL: Yokkorasho is along the line of “Up I go” and it implies that the person has some difficulties standing up on their own, like an elderly】

「..... Like I'll go back without results!」(Lyle)

「Wh.. WHAT!?」(Kousuke)

At Lyle's sudden outburst Kousuke was surprised.

「I understand what you mean, but you charged in recklessly and made a mess. I have no intention of letting you continue that you know?」(Tony)

「But!」(Lyle)

「Hmm.. Alright, then you can search past that door, but that's all」(Tony)

Tony pointed at a door near the pedestal the sculpture was most likely originally on.

「If you can't accept this compromise then I'll drag your unconscious body out instead. Even if it means I have to break a bone or two to do so」(Tony)

「.... I got it..」(Lyle)

Lyle reluctantly nodded and headed to the door. In the past, he was knocked unconscious by Tony before so he knew it wasn't a bluff.

While Tony, Lyle and Horton were scaling down the wall with the rope, Kousuke jumped down and gracefully landed.

Lyle's jealousy grew more seeing this.

After this job, Lyle never worked with Kousuke ever again. But due to this experience he had, it would lead to him to developing and accomplishing many great things in the future.

「I don't think there are any traps. What do you think Kousuke?」(Tony)

「Hmm.... I feel that something's a little off?」(Kousuke)

「I see, mind checking it out just in case? Horton, observe Kousuke carefully, it'll help out when you search for traps on your own. Lyle, you too. I saw quite a

few traps that were triggered by you two on the way here. If you can't handle and disarm even those then don't think yourself as a full-fledged adventurer」(Tony)

While Lyle and Horton observed, Kousuke began probing for traps. He wasn't able to figure out what would come out if the trap sprung, but he figured out how to work around it and disarmed it successfully.

The door opened and Tony examined the dismantled trap and concluded that it was set to release smoke. The compound was mixed with some sort of chemical that would cause those that inhaled it to see hallucinations.

The reason why they found out was because Horton sneezed when they were examining the chemical and scattered it, resulting in Lyle and Horton inhaling it.

The two were giggling and smiling like idiots, it seemed the hallucination they saw was very pleasant.

While those two were dreaming pleasantly, Kousuke and Tony investigated the room.

「Oi, snap out of it already」(Tony)

Finished with investigating the room, Tony was smacking Lyle and Horton awake.

「Huh? Where's Iris?」(Lyle)

「Where's Iris-san?」(Horton)

The hallucination the two saw was obviously related to Iris.

「Iris is standing guard near the base. She wasn't here since the beginning. The two of you were just hallucinating」(Tony)

Hearing that they were hallucinating, the two hung their heads down in embarrassment.

「Well... I don't know what you two saw, but wipe it from your minds. And about the results of our investigation of the room...」(Tony)

Hearing that, Lyle stood up immediately.

「Was there something?!」(Lyle)

「Jewelries, decorated armors, and some old currencies」(Tony)

「That's amazing! Doesn't that mean we're rich!?」(Horton)

Hearing the results of the investigation, Horton completely recovered.

「Well, the things we found belong to the country now. None of this will go into our pocket you know. This area still belongs to the country's jurisdiction. If we found those in an undiscovered ruin then it would have belonged to us」(Tony)

「That... Is that the case?」(Horton)

The excitement in Horton visibly faded.

「Lyle told me that if we found any treasures it would be ours though...」
(Horton)

「Well, I thought that would be the case」(Lyle)

When Lyle heard that a hidden passage existed, he coaxed the information out of Horton by telling him of the possible riches they could attain if Horton would guide him to the place.

「Lyle, didn't you study enough? I clearly remember teaching you about this though」(Tony)

「I forgot about it. Either way, mind showing me the stuff you found? Just looking at it won't hurt right?」(Lyle)

「It's over here. Don't touch anything. The placement of these things might be important for the scholars' research」(Tony)

The two were lead into the room and saw the jewelries and other treasures. Their faces were tinged with a sense of disappointment.

They were disappointed that the amount of treasures was smaller than they expected.

If the treasures here were converted into money then it would allow a person to live comfortably for only about three years. If the other valuables they saw on the way here were added then it would only increase that amount by two years.

「Your faces tell me you were expecting to see a lot more huh?」(Tony)

「This place had that kind of gatekeeper, this just doesn't make sense!」(Lyle)

「That's right! We almost died!」(Horton)

「I felt the same way too, but this is the reality. I think when the people abandoned this place they took most of their valuables with them. The stuff we found here were probably just things they couldn't carry」(Tony)

「There might be another hidden passage right?」(Horton)

To Horton's question, Tony shook his head.

「From what I saw, there's nothing like that left. Kousuke's checking too, but don't get your hopes up」(Tony)

「Mhmm, I didn't find any」(Kousuke

Kousuke landed near them and agreed with Tony. He investigated the upper levels too, but found nothing like a hidden room.

「You finished searching I see」(Tony)

「I checked the ceilings too, I didn't find anything. Everything of value in this area was probably stored in that room」(Kousuke)

「Then, let's head back up」(Tony)

Lyle wasn't satisfied but he knew he would be knocked unconscious if he complained any more so he reluctantly agreed.

Horton glanced at the treasures with regret, but his urge to leave was stronger so he agreed.

To those two, their exploration of the ruin was very unprofitable. They didn't realize that the experience they gained, especially the encounter with a life and death situation, was priceless.

On the other hand, the things Kousuke gained was large. With the experience he had so far, he was able to determine more accurately what his limit was. While feeling elated with a sense of accomplishment, he reached the surface.

But despite finding out how strong he is, he has yet to realize his own weaknesses. In the future, his weaknesses may prove to be fatal.

「We've returned」(Kousuke)

「Welcome back, Kousuke」(Konsato)

Konsato welcomed Kousuke back. Tony and the others went into the base to discuss their findings and to apologize.

Even though Lyle acted on his own, his reckless actions allowed for new discoveries so they were able to avoid a pay cut.

「What did you find inside?」(Konsato)

「That was the first time seeing something like that so I can't give an accurate description」(Kousuke)

The ruin he and Borudosu went into didn't count in his mind.

「There were traps, monsters and even a gatekeeper」(Kousuke)

「Gatekeeper?」(Konsato)

「I'm pretty sure it was a gatekeeper as it was protecting a storage room」(Kousuke)

「.... But if it's just a storage room a gatekeeper being there doesn't make

sense... Maybe this might have something to do with my research?」(Konsato)

Konsato was thinking deeply as he remembered something.

「Was this place very special?」(Kousuke)

「Special? I guess so. There's a record saying that this temple had a storage room filled with all the valuables for safekeeping. But we never found that storage room so I assumed that it was mistakenly recorded」(Konsato)

「So the discovery of that gatekeeper was an evidence supporting that record?」(Kousuke)

Konsato nodded.

「.... Is it possible.. That the gatekeeper is also a valuable research material?」(Kousuke)

「It might be」(Konsato)

「.... Sorry. I broke the gatekeeper」(Kousuke)

「You broke it?」(Konsato)

「Lyle and Horton were being chased by it so I broke it to save them」
(Kousuke)

「Well, if that's the case then it can't be helped. What's the condition you left the gatekeeper in?」(Konsato)

Kousuke told him to the best of his memory. He also explained that magic can't be used around it.

「You were unable to cast any spells I see. This is intriguing. The sculpture has its chest and a hand destroyed... and its head was lopped off..... Well, I'm sure it'll be fine」(Konsato)

Konsato was imagining that the sculpture's size was just a bit bigger than an adult male. He didn't fancy the idea that the sculpture Kousuke defeated was four meters tall.

When he goes down to investigate the sculpture later, he's shocked at its size and was even more shocked at how ridiculously strong Kousuke was.

The scolding toward Lyle, Horton and Iris was finished so the group headed back to St. Beria.

Konsato and his colleagues reported their findings to their organization and were immediately preparing to head out once more.

Konsato wanted to request Kousuke's assistance once more, but Kousuke had his hands full with the "Hero Show" so he was declined.

In return, Kousuke provided Konsato with a detailed findings of all the traps, monsters and relevant room information to ease his investigations.

On the day Konsato returned to St. Beria, Kousuke already left on a long journey.

Chapter 16: Let's go! To the next continent!

Two days after Randolph and his troupe left, the town returned back to its normal feeling.

Kousuke decided to accept a subjugation request today.

He prepped to leave, greeted Shidi and headed out of the inn. Kousuke went to the usual waiting spot to meet with Viare and the two went to the guild together.

While the two were looking for a good request to accept, someone tapped Kousuke's back. Kousuke turned around with a curious look.

「Alice-san?」(Kousuke)

For the first time in a month, it was Alice standing before him.

Kousuke noticed that Alice was giving off a slightly different feeling. She was

standing very close and could be seen as intimate. Still, he felt that it might have just been his imagination.

「I came to pick you up~」(Alice)

「Did you two finish your business over there?」(Kousuke)

「No it's not done. About that, I need a small favor. It might be sudden but can you prepare for the journey? We'll go together」(Alice)

The person that responded to the invitation wasn't Kousuke, but Viare.

「Kousuke-san, you're going on a journey?」(Viare)

「I guess so. It was originally planned a while ago. Viare, do you want to come too? We planned to sightsee a bit too so it might be a while before we return. Right, Alice-san?」(Kousuke)

「That's correct. We won't return in a week or a month. By the way, there's something I wanted to ask」(Alice)

Alice's tone changed slightly, sounding a bit tense. It was too subtle though, Kousuke didn't notice at all. Still, even if he did notice it's not like he could figure out why. The reason involved Kousuke's future so it would be a wonder if he knew.

「So, what's your relationship with that girl?」(Alice)

「I too would like to know her relationship with you」(Viare)

The two's gazed at each other and it seemed as if a small spark appeared between the two.

「This is Alice-san. She took care of various things for me. She mainly taught me magic and common sense. This person is Viare. She currently lives in this village and due to various circumstances is currently working alongside me. Also, she knows about my title」(Kousuke)

「.... You told her about it?」(Alice)

Alice's mood and expression became serious.

Kousuke shook his head.

「She has the gift to see people's titles」(Kousuke)

「Tell me what my title is then」(Alice)

To confirm the validity of that claim, Alice asked Viare.

Alice is quite famous and her name is well known. But she vanished from the frontlines for the past ten years so most people don't know her appearance anymore. Since her titles are also concealed and unknown to most, if Viare is able to correctly state her titles than it would prove that her gift is real.

「"The Great Witch"」(Viare)

Viare used her gift and easily stated the title. After a few moments, Viare was surprised what came out of her mouth.

「"The Great Witch"?! Are you "One Night, Thousand Deaths"?！」(Viare) 【TL: Ichiya Sen'ya 一夜千殺 – literally means one night thousand deaths.. Sorry, I don't know how to translate this in any other way】

「"One Night, Thousand Deaths"? What's that?」(Kousuke)

Hearing this for the first time, Kousuke tilted his head. He felt that if something like that was said on Earth, it would definitely be mocked.

「Well now, that's a familiar nickname I haven't heard for some time. Where did you hear that name?」(Alice)

「My father's a former adventurer and he told me stories about you. He was there that night and he still remembers it well」(Viare)

「So he was one of the adventurer that was there that night. It makes sense that he would know then」(Alice)

To the satisfied Alice, Kousuke inquired.

「Ah, excuse me. “One Night, Thousand Deaths” is the nickname I got when I was in my thirties. There was an army of monsters marching towards a town about a month away from here. I killed most of the monsters on my own so I was given the nickname “One Night, Thousand Deaths”. Still, the monsters that were attacking weren’t that strong so it wasn’t dangerous for me」(Alice)

Alice’s eyes were twinkling as she recalled the events of that night.

「I heard that the adventurers there were demoralized by the sheer number of monsters that night. Among them, Alicia-san stood her ground to protect the town. Her fame soared from this event and everyone knew the name of Alicia-san」(Viare)

「That’s amazing」(Kousuke)

Kousuke looked at Alice in awe for fighting an overwhelming army of monsters to protect a town.

Alice smiled bitterly at Kousuke's compliment.

「To tell you the truth, it wasn't as amazing as it was made out to be. I was just releasing the pent up stress I had then. I didn't do it to protect the town」(Alice)

「.... Is that the truth?」(Viare)

At the confused Viare, Alice nodded without hesitation.

「I was quite wild during that time」(Alice)

「So it could be said that the monsters were just unlucky and the town was lucky that night?」(Viare)

「That's about it. That interpretation is pretty much spot on」(Alice)

「..... I definitely can't tell my father about this」(Viare)

Wei held Alice in high regards for protecting that town. When he was telling Viare the story about that night, it was obvious just how much he respected Alice.

And yet, the truth was that the person in question inadvertently protected the town for her stress relief. If something like is told to Wei... Viare decided to keep quiet about this from Wei, she would rather protect her father's misconception of that night than disillusion him.

「In any case, your gift to see other people's title seems to be the real deal. I hope you can keep quiet about his title, alright?」(Alice)

「Yes! I won't speak a word. Borudosu already strictly warned me about that!」(Viare)

「Oh.. So Borudosu already told you to keep quiet」(Alice)

「With a mild threat. It almost slipped out of her mouth once, but Borudosu stopped her」(Kousuke)

「Will she be alright?」(Alice)

「She is quite careless...」(Kousuke)

They were speaking as if it was another person's problem, but they knew Viare could be trusted. He's known Viare for quite some time now so. He felt that it was enough to put his trust in her.

「Don't worry! It only slipped out once before! It's never happened again」
(Viare)

「Don't let it slip out alright? It'll make things complicated if you do. Maybe I should put a spell on you that'll cause great pain if you spill it」(Alice)

Viare quickly stepped back, shaking her head over and over.

「Well, I won't do something like that yet, but if you ever let it slip out again I'll cast it on you without hesitation alright? Engrave that in your heart」(Alice)

「YES!」(Viare)

Alice had no intention of using such magic, but wanted to threaten her a bit. Seeing that it was effective, she smiled and nodded.

「Sorry for making you do something like this for me. So, let's stop with the threats and get back to the main point」(Kousuke)

「Don't reveal that it was a threat! But I agree, we went off topic there. There's no point in idly chatting here so let's head over to the inn you're staying in」(Alice)

Before they headed out, Kousuke informed the guild that he would be absent for a prolonged period of time.

When they arrived at the inn, Shidi approached them thinking they were customers.

「Welco.. Hmm? Did you forget something?」(Shidi)

「Not really, but why did you think that?」(Kousuke)

「You came back a lot earlier than usual. So the person next to Viare isn't a client of yours I assume」(Shidi)

「This is Borudosu's older sister, Alice」(Kousuke)

「Borudosu has an older sister!?」(Shidi)

Shidi heard for the first time Borudosu had an older sister and Alice's appearance shocked her more.

「I heard that Borudosu is under your care often. You have my thanks」(Alice)

「He's a guest of our inn so that's a given! Even so, he's helped us greatly by staying at our inn often and bringing other guests as well! Would Alice-san also be staying here? If so, I'll prepare the best room for you right away」(Shidi)

「No, there's no need for that. I'll be leaving the town today」(Alice)

「Is that so」(Shidi)

「I'll be leaving too. It'll probably be over a month before I come back here」(Kousuke)

「You are as well? Even Borudosu-san said that he would be absent from town for an extended period of time」(Shidi)

「Borudosu most likely went to Kalhode」(Alice)

「Alice-san knew where he was heading?」(Shidi)

「Mhmm. He went to the allied nations of Yuke in Kalhode. There's a martial tournament event starting there in about a month. He told me he was planning on participating in that tournament」(Alice)

「I see, his long absence makes sense if he's traveling to Kalhode. I hope he gets a good result」(Shidi)

「Well, we'll find out later. I'm more worried that he might go berserk. Kousuke, mind leading us to your room?」(Alice)

“Understood” responded Kousuke as he led the two to his room.

He unlocked his room and invited Alice and Viare in.

Kousuke sat down on a chair while the other two sat on his bed.

「So, about the favor you have..」(Kousuke)

「Mhmm. Remember that Horun and I traveled to Hunsing?」(Alice)

「Yes. She was invited as a doctor」(Kousuke)

Alice nodded.

Hearing that, Viare interrupted with a shocked expression.

「Just one moment please. By Dr. Horun, do you mean Horun-sama of the Colbes family?」(Viare)

「That's right」(Alice)

「Another celebrity!? Kousuke-san! Just what kinds of relationships do you make!?」(Viare)

「Even if you ask me that...」(Kousuke)

「I feel that your relationship with her is a pretty simple one. This fella's the

dragonslayer, and Horun was the sacrifice. See, easy to figure out right?」(Alice)

「..... So Kousuke-san challenged the dragon to save Horun-sama?」(Viare)

It seemed like Viare was imagining a “Knight in shining armor” saving a princess so her eyes were sparkling intensely.

「No, no, I became a dragonslayer by accident. I can't give you the details, but I didn't defeat the dragon with the purpose of saving her. I wasn't even conscious when I defeated it. I realized I was a dragonslayer the moment I woke up」(Kousuke)

「It's not something people can become overnight though」(Viare)

「There's a witness in front of you. Just accept that situations like this can happen」(Alice)

「Hmm...」(Viare)

Her face looked unconvinced, but Viare nodded anyways. She knew that she wouldn't get anything more out of them.

「Let's return back to the main topic, so she went to Hunsing as a doctor, what happened after?」(Kousuke)

「She went as a doctor so obviously she was treating someone. Just a small problem happened when we were there. According to Horun's examination, she can treat the person, but the medicine she needed to treat it ran out」(Alice)

「So it's something that can't be bought I assume?」(Kousuke)

If it was something that gold could purchase, Alice, who has an enormous fortune, could have bought it.

「Exactly that, you catch on quick. The ingredient is a bit unique and it's not something easily attained. I know where we can get some, but that location is a problem」(Alice)

「Where?」(Kousuke)

「It's in a Domain of the Gods」(Alice)

「If I remember, you can't enter it unless you receive a god's blessing right?」
(Kousuke)

「Mhmm. Among the people there, only Horun had a god's blessing. But I can't let Horun, who has no fighting capabilities, enter such a dangerous place. So everyone agreed to find an adventurer with a god's blessing and I explained that I know a perfect candidate. Horun guaranteed it as well so the others agreed」(Alice)

「Ah, so the favor you wanted to ask is for me to enter the Domain of the Gods. That's fine」(Kousuke)

Hearing how casually he accepted, Alice was a bit surprised.

「That was a surprisingly quick consent. A little while ago you would have shirked from something like this」(Alice)

「I experienced a lot while I was staying in this town. I got a little used to combat as well」(Kousuke)

「I hope you're not overestimating yourself」(Alice)

「I don't think I'm overestimating myself, at least I know I'm not accepting it

unwillingly. So, that Domain of the Gods is in Hunsing?」(Kousuke)

「No, this one is in Kalhode. It's near the previously mentioned allied nations of Yuke」(Alice)

「Our travel method is by boat right? An extended travel on a boat is a first for me, I'm a bit excited」(Kousuke)

「Sorry for ruining your excitement but.. We're traveling with magic. The other side is demanding to get this done as quickly as possible you see...」(Alice)

The ancient clan wanted the treatment done as soon as possible. Alice understood why they would demand a hasty completion.

「I see, so that's the case. I guess my boat ride will have to wait」(Kousuke)

「Sorry that's the case」(Alice)

「Well, I should prepare for the trip then. Ah, so Viare, how about you?」(Kousuke)

「I.. would like to go too, but the travel expenses...」(Viare)

「Remember that the guild would provide it for you?」(Kousuke)

If it was a closer place then she wouldn't hesitate, but because it's so far this time around she didn't want to shove something so expensive on the guild.

「Why would the guild provide for the travel expenses? Unless there's a special circumstance I can't see them doing something like that」(Alice)

Alice was an adventurer in the past as well. She figured from what she heard that Viare's relation with the guild is a bit unique.

Kousuke glanced toward Viare to see if it's alright to explain everything. Viare was confused at Kousuke's stare for a moment, but ended up explaining her situation herself.

「So the distortion.. I see.. I understand now. If it's something like that then coming with us is probably a good idea. You don't have to worry about the travel expenses. The ancient clan gave me an advanced payment of eight gold coins. We'll just use that for now」(Alice)

Eight gold coins, this was enough for a family of four to live comfortably without working! Whether it's an ordinary person or an adventurer, that sum was enormous.

「Eh? But I'm not going to be of any help with that request though?」(Viare)

「This money is actually Kousuke's. If Kousuke allows it then there's no problem」(Alice)

「If that's the case then give half of it to Viare. Hmm the only thing that would cost money when I'm preparing is.... Ah whatever, it's fine. Yup, let's give her half」(Kousuke)

Viare panicked at suddenly receiving a large amount of money.

「You paused there for a second, but is there something wrong?」(Viare)

「You don't have to worry about it」(Kousuke)

「Even if you say that...」(Viare)

It still worried Viare, Kousuke could see that.

「Alright, so during my escort job my sword got damaged quite badly. I forgot to get it repaired. I kept pushing it off since I didn't have any need to use it. The repair would cost some money, but even if I bring it to the smith I won't get it back in time so the money's no longer necessary. Alice-san, would it be alright if you teach me some attack oriented magic later?」(Kousuke)

To replace his sword, he thought to use magic instead.

「That's fine」(Alice)

「If possible could you teach me something that could disable a large amount of foes instead of killing them?」(Kousuke)

To Kousuke's request, Alice immediately nodded as she recalled quite a few spells that fit his requirements.

「While I'm being taught the new magic, Viare, you can go prepare for the journey」(Kousuke)

「That sounds good. Ah, but I've never gone on a journey like this before so I have no idea what to bring」(Viare)

「Wouldn't Wei-san know? Since he used to be an adventurer and it's something he needed」(Kousuke)

Convinced with that answer, Viare got up.

「Since you might need to buy something, please take the money. Alice-san, please」(Kousuke)

Alice reached into her pocket and gave Viare four gold coins.

Viare stared at the gold coins in her hand and opened her mouth.

「..... This... I can't accept this. I'm not doing anything.. So this much is..」
(Viare)

When she actually received it, she felt even more reserved and uncomfortable accepting it.

「Then, how about if it's a loan? You can pay it back whenever you can」
(Kousuke)

「Mm.. if it's that then.. I'll borrow four gold coins then. But I don't need all four right now so could one of you hold onto the three gold coins for the meantime? I think I'll end up dropping them if I have them all」(Viare)

「That does sound likely...」(Kousuke)

The convinced Kousuke accepted the three gold coins and placed them on the table.

Viare left the inn to prepare.

Kousuke gathered his things and separated the things into two groups, one for traveling and the other to leave behind. He planned to pay Shidi to store the things he wanted to leave behind. It's not much so she should accept it.

「I'm done preparing so please teach me the magic」(Kousuke)

「Very well. I'll be teaching you "Shockwave", "Earthen Spear", and "Explosive Fireball". "Shockwave" is the one that can incapacitate enemies. If you're aiming to not kill then don't use "Earthen Spear" or "Explosive Fireball"」(Alice)

「Fights that involve a lot of bloodshed is a bit...」(Kousuke)

「Just in case it's a good idea to learn those too. The place I'm asking you to go have dangerous monsters roaming around too」(Alice)

「Come to think of it, what kind of place is the Domain of the Gods?」(Kousuke)

Alice explained that what she learned is from hearsays and books before she began.

The name of the particular Domain of the Gods is “Columudg” and this domain has a few gods involved.

It doesn't have any peculiar terrains. It has forests, plains, rivers, and mountains. Animals and monsters are everywhere.

It doesn't have any human settlements. Therefore this domain is an unspoiled nature. It contains precious plants and ores, as well as near extinct species.

It's possible to travel from edge to edge of this domain in a week.

Even though there are people that can enter this domain, the reason why it still contains these precious materials is because the amount they can bring out is limited. Furthermore, without a god's permission the materials can't be brought out.

「Permission?」(Kousuke)

「Every Domain of the Gods have a shrine-like building in them. You need to go there to get permission」(Alice)

「How do I know I got permission? Will I get some sort of proof?」(Kousuke)

「Apparently you'll receive a verbal confirmation from a god. Also, you'll go through a trial before you're allowed to enter the shrine. Each trial is different from person to person. Depending on which god is giving you the trial, the

difficulty will vary as well」(Alice)

「A trial huh. Is it something like a large monster or a storm chasing me?」
(Kousuke)

「Trials like that have appeared before. I haven't heard of any deaths though. If you receive a fatal wound inside the domain you'll get healed and thrown out」(Alice)

These measures were not placed because the gods favored the humans, but because humans dying inside the domain would be a nuisance. The Domain of the Gods followed the rule of "Survival of the Fittest". Since dying is a given inside the domain, everything inside doesn't leave resentment when they die. But human beings, or any creature with a high enough intelligence, would leave behind the feeling of regret when they die. Negative emotions like that lingering in the domain would taint it. Gods that want to maintain the natural order of their domains would throw out human beings if they're about to die.

Without realizing what the true reason was, Kousuke was simply relieved that he wouldn't die inside the domain.

「Hearing that I feel a bit better」(Kousuke)

「I'm glad you feel better, but failure means you'll be barred from entering again for an entire year. Please keep that in mind. Don't push yourself, but do

your best」(Alice)

「Got it」(Kousuke)

「Alright, let's talk about magic again」(Alice)

Alice explained the movements and incantations required for each spell one at a time.

“Shockwave” is emitted out of the hand. By sweeping the hand like a sickle mowing grass, it’s possible to change the focus from a singular point to a cone in front of the caster.

For the best effect, casting it at point blank range was recommended. Ordinary people would be killed by this method though. It becomes weaker the wider the spray is, about five meter is its limit this way. This method’s strength at best would trip an adult male. If it’s just tripping something, the magic he learned from Tony would be enough though.

“Earthen Spear” is just as it sounded, spears made out of the ground spikes out. It can create one to thirty spears, its amount is up to the caster. The spears can be created in a range of three meters around the caster. The largest spear that can be created is about a meter in length with a width of fifty centimeters.

There is also a similar magic that uses ice as a medium instead.

The last magic taught was the “Explosive Fireball”. This summons a fireball with a diameter of a meter. If it hits something or whenever the caster wishes, the fireball will explode, spreading fire everywhere. Not only can it cause great damage, but it can also be used as a smokescreen.

By the way, the strongest spell in Kousuke’s current arsenal is “Beam”. Its weakness is that it only travels straight and is easily avoided, but it has enough firepower to pierce through steel.

「Well, that’s about it. Just practice a bit to get used to them」(Alice)

「Thank you」(Kousuke)

The two confirmed the incantation and movements once more. They cleaned up the room a bit and began to chat idly as they waited for Viare. When it was about lunchtime, Viare came into the room lugging a giant backpack.

「Sorry for keeping you waiting」(Viare)

「Since Viare arrived, shall we get going?」(Kousuke)

「Before that, let's get something to eat first. Will it be fine if we dine in this inn?」(Alice)

「Should be fine」(Kousuke)

「Then please lead the way」(Alice)

The three left the room and headed to the dining area.

After they finished lunch, they gave their farewells to Shidi. She requested for some souvenirs and saw the three off.

Alice began preparing to use her teleportation magic. After ten minutes she turned around to the other two.

「You two, grab my hand. If you're too far I can't teleport with you」(Alice)

Alice offered her hands to the two. Once the two grabbed a hand each, Alice casted the spell.

Since it was Viare's first time teleporting with magic her face was very stiff.

Right when Kousuke tried to calm Viare down the magic was completed and the three vanished from St. Beria.

Shidi glanced up from the spot the three vanished from and prayed for their safety. After, she headed back into the inn.